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OR,
**THE BOY DETECTIVES'
LEAGUE.**

A Romance of Metropolitan Mystery
and a Companion Story to "Wizard
Will, The Wonder Worker."

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "A CABIN BOY'S LUCK," "THE
OCEAN FIREFLY," "HAPHAZARD HARRY,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE STORY.

CAPTAIN RYAN DALY, Chief of the — Po-
lice Precinct in the great City of New York, sat
alone in his private office.

"I PRONOUNCE THIS MAN A MURDERER," AND WIZARD WILL SPOKE WITH DEEP IMPRESSIVE-
NESS, AS HE LAID HIS HAND HEAVILY UPON THE SHOULDER OF THE PRISONER.

It was a pleasant afternoon, and the force were out on duty, and he was momentarily idle and lost in deep reverie.

A handsome man, with a bold, resolute face and stern mien, an athletic, upright form, he looked like a dashing captain of cavalry, rather than an officer of the police, and those who knew him well said that he had the courage of a lion and the heart of a woman, for though severe with the criminal, a thorough master of his men, he yet always had a kind word for the erring and unfortunate whom circumstances beyond control had brought before him.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," said an officer, entering, and the captain took the card and read aloud:

"RICHARD IVEY,
No. —, East 34th Street."

"Ah! a visit from Colonel Ivey."

"I wonder what brings him here?"

"Show him in, please."

A moment after a distinguished-looking gentleman entered, and one who looked as though he was amply possessed of this world's goods.

He had a military air, a kindly face, withal it was stern, and the eyes, when not brightened by conversation, wore a sad look.

The police captain arose politely at the entrance of the visitor, and said:

"Colonel Ivey, I have long known you by reputation, and am honored by a call, sir."

"Pray tell me how I can serve you?"

The visitor extended his hand, and returned with a smile:

"Permit me to say, Captain Daly, that I have known you also by reputation as one of our most efficient police officers, and I have sought you upon a matter in which I desire to ask your aid, and also to place confidence in you."

The police captain placed a chair by his desk for his visitor, and waited for him to make known the cause of his calling.

After a moment Colonel Ivey said:

"To give you the entire facts in the case, Captain Daly, I must go back a year, nearly, to one Thanksgiving morning, when I found in the street this three-dollar gold piece you see I wear as a charm upon my chain."

"I found it had a hole in it, and for good luck, as the superstitious say, I put it on my chain as a charm; but hardly had I done so when I saw a boy running along the pavement, looking as though he was searching for something."

"I at once felt that he was the owner of the gold piece, and as he came up I discovered that I was right."

"He was an exceedingly handsome lad of fourteen, well formed, and very polite in his manners, though his appearance indicated that he was poor."

"A short conversation with him revealed the fact that the gold piece was all the money left to his mother, his sister and himself, and he had come out to spend a third of it in a Thanksgiving dinner."

"The boy impressed me deeply, Captain Daly, and I went with him to the market, and thence to his home, and I met his mother, a refined, lovely woman, and his sister, several years his senior, who was a perfect little fairy."

"I discovered that the family were almost starving, and learned their history, as I knew them better."

"The lady was from down in Maryland, the daughter of a planter, and had eloped with a young Philadelphian, who had pretended to love her, and afterward deserted her with her two children."

"An accomplished woman, she had made a support by painting little pictures for sale, and sent her children to school, doing all in her power for them."

"Hearing that her worthless husband had been killed in a railroad accident, she returned to Philadelphia, hoping to get some property he had pretended to possess; but she could only find out that he had run through with a small fortune that had been left him, and had then made his living by gambling."

"Back to New York she came, and it was when suffering in poverty that I met her son, by finding the gold piece."

"The more I saw of the lady, the more I admired and respected her, and at last I made her my wife."

"When at my country seat the past summer, I was called West, and during my absence this worthless husband turned up, having intended just what happened, that she should, believing him dead, win by her beauty and refinement the love of some rich man, and then by threats of prosecution he could get money from her."

"This he was foiled in, for she asked for a

certain time in which to decide, and then secretly left my home with her children, hiding from both the rascal and myself."

"A letter left for me told me all, but she went forth destitute, taking nothing from me, and I have in vain tried to find her, and so have come to you for aid."

"I am glad that you have, Colonel Ivey, and I will do all in my power to aid you," said Captain Daly.

"I feel that you will, sir, and let me say that, as the lady did not keep her appointment with her worthless husband, he sought her at my country home."

"She had gone, but I was there, and as he said he was an old friend of hers, I felt that he was the man and told him, in a pretended confidential way, that she had gone to escape him, and that I was determined to capture him and put him in jail for crimes I knew him to be guilty of."

"This was guess-work for me, but it frightened him, as I could see, and he hastily took his departure, thinking that I did not know him, and he took a West-bound train, so I think I am free of him."

"Until he grows desperate for money."

"You think he will return?"

"Certainly, sir."

"But I am anxious to find her and have her get a divorce from him, as she can do."

"Certainly, upon the charge of desertion and non-support."

"The first thing, Captain Daly, is to find the lady and her children, for, though she will not allow me to care for her, she must let me take care of her two noble children, whom I love as though they were my own."

"What name does she bear now, sir?"

"I do not know, sir, as she may have changed her maiden name, which she had retaken, that of Raymond."

The police captain seldom exhibited a sign of what he felt, but he started slightly as Colonel Ivey mentioned the name, while he said:

"She was known as Mrs. Raymond, and her children as Will and Pearl."

"You know them, sir?" eagerly asked Colonel Ivey.

"I met them quite awhile ago, when little Pearl dashed into my office—I was a sergeant of police then—and begged me to come home with her, as there was a man there who had sought to kill her mother."

"I went in a hurry, and discovered an escaped convict on the floor, two wounds upon his head, and standing over him, to keep him in subjection, a boy with an iron poker raised above his head."

"The fellow had entered the rooms to rob Mrs. Raymond, and was threatening her when the children returned from school, and the darling boy had gone to his mother's rescue and brought down the villain with a blow of the iron, while his little sister came for help."

"He dealt the man another blow, when he sought to rise, and thus kept him in subjection."

"Yes, I heard of that act, and he is as fearless as a man, while he is one of the brightest boys I ever saw and a perfect little athlete."

"This summer at my home he handled a yacht with wonderful skill, and rode a horse like a Comanche, so that I am anxious to give him every advantage, and bring out the man that is in him."

"I agree with you, Colonel Ivey, and I will do all I can to find them for you."

"Do not spare any expense, Captain Daly, for I will pay most liberally."

"Thank you, sir," and a moment after Colonel Ivey left the police officer; but he had not been gone five minutes ere a young boy entered, and walked up to Captain Daly, who said:

"Ah! Wizard Will, I have news for you."

"Yes, sir."

"Your step-father, Colonel Ivey, was just here looking for you."

"Oh, sir, did you tell him where we were?" and the boy turned very pale, as he eagerly gazed at the officer, while awaiting his response, which came slowly:

"No, I did not tell him, though I wished to do so."

"No! no! no! you must never do that, Captain Daly, never!" and the captain had never before seen his Boy Detective, for such he was, so excited, and he wondered what strange secret lay back of what he had heard and now saw.

CHAPTER II.

WIZARD WILL, THE BOY FERRET.

THE youth who had entered the office of the captain of police was a handsome, dashing fellow of about fifteen.

He was dressed in a suit of dark gray, wore a slouch hat, and from his erect bearing and firm step might have been taken for a West Point cadet.

His face was manly, fearless and strikingly intelligent, while his eyes had the calm regard of one who felt a conscious power in himself.

As his coat was thrown back it displayed a gold shield upon the left breast, with a silver star upon one side and a scroll upon the other, upon the latter being the inscription "U. S. Marshal."

Upon the gold shield were the words, "Officer of Secret Service," and upon the six-point star, "Special Police."

He was certainly a young person to wear these honored badges of office, but, young as he was, he had won them honorably, while his deeds had won for him in the force the name of "Wizard Will, the Boy Ferret."

Seeing that his youthful officer was deeply affected by the information that Colonel Ivey had been at the police precinct in search of him, Captain Daly said:

"Will, is there anything you wish to tell me about this affair?"

"No, Captain Daly, I have nothing to tell, sir."

"You do not wish to meet Colonel Ivey?"

"Such is my mother's earnest wish, sir, and I desire to respect it."

"He was your step-father, I believe?"

"He is now, sir."

The captain looked at the boy fixedly, for his remark seemed to imply that he did not know that his own father was alive.

"Do you remember your own father?"

"No, sir."

"He departed when you were very young?"

"Yes, sir, when I was but five years old. I believe, he went West and was killed in a railway accident."

This showed that the boy knew nothing of the return of his father, and Captain Daly asked:

"Pardon me, Will, but did your father treat your mother badly?"

"I never heard her say so, sir, other than that if he had not been so extravagant we would have been well off."

"What made your mother leave Colonel Ivey?"

"That, sir, is a secret my mother has kept from me."

"He treated her kindly?"

"Oh, yes, sir, in every way he was a most devoted husband."

"And as a step-father?"

"My own father, sir, could not have been more loving and good to Pearl and I."

"Yet your mother left him?"

"Yes, sir."

"And gave no reason?"

"She said that she had a reason, but that we must trust her, and not, under any circumstances, allow Colonel Ivey to find us."

"Well, Will, he is most anxious to know where you are."

"You did not tell him, sir?" eagerly asked the boy.

"Oh, no, I would not do that without asking you or your mother; but I told him I thought I could find you for him."

"And what did he say?"

"That I must do so, for if your mother would not return to him, he was anxious to care for you and your sister."

"Mother will not consent, sir, for unless she had a good reason, she would never have left him as she did, and she will remain firm, I am sure."

"I might go out and have a talk with her about it, Will?"

"Certainly, sir."

"The colonel is a splendid man, from all I have heard of him, and he so impressed me today, while he is immensely wealthy, and is able and willing to do for you all."

"As much as I would hate to give you up, for you are most useful to me, and, boy though you are, second to none on the force, I would gladly let you go to receive the advantages the colonel could give you, and I would urge your going to him, though giving up my Captain of the Boy Detectives' League would be like losing my left hand."

"I thank you, Captain Daly, and I would dislike to have to give up the League just as I am getting my boy comrades such good allies for you; but then I would like, I think, a different life, such as Colonel Ivey could start me upon as his step-son."

"I know it, my boy, and I will go out with you to supper to-night, and have a talk with your mother about it, so telegraph her we are

coming," and the kind-hearted captain turned to his desk to examine some papers which Wizard Will had placed there upon entering the room.

Since his first meeting with the boy, when he discovered him over the prostrate robber, he had taken a great fancy to him, and when, some months after Will had come to him with the discovery of a den of robbers, known as Land Sharks, and from which the Loy had just made a daring escape, and led the police in their raid upon them, Captain Daly had taken Will into his service, and the youth had organized a band of youngsters which had been called the Boy Detectives' League, and good service they did, too.

Thus, though anxious to keep the young detective captain with him, Captain Daly was not so selfish as to deprive him of a brilliant future as the step-son of Colonel Ivey the millionaire soldier, and so that evening went out with Wizard Will to the little cottage, which he himself had gotten as the home of the unfortunate woman and her two children, and which was situated in the outskirts of a village on Long Island Sound but a short run by train from New York City.

CHAPTER III.

THE FUGITIVES.

UPON the piazza of a pleasant, but small cottage, situated upon the sloping hillside, and overlooking Long Island Sound, sat two persons, alternately talking together, and then bending their gaze out upon the sail-dotted waters.

It was a cosy little home, with a pretty flower yard in front, a vegetable garden in the rear, a lawn, some majestic trees, and a stable not far distant.

A horse, two cows, some ducks and chickens gave a pleasant aspect to the abode, while over the hill-top were visible the spires of several churches in a village half a mile away.

The two who sat upon the piazza were mother and daughter, the former being a woman of thirty three or four, and a face of Madonna-like beauty in its touching sadness.

She was dressed in a neat-fitting dress, and her hair was worn in braids at the back of her head.

The daughter was a little maiden of twelve, sunny-haired, blue-eyed and with a face of perfect beauty, which her form though *petite* was graceful and bade fair to develop into beautiful womanhood.

"Hark! Mother, there comes the train," cried the young girl, as the low rumble of a distant moving train reached her ears.

"Yes, Pearl, so we will walk to the hill-top to meet them," answered the mother, and the two left the piazza and ascended the hill road leading to the village.

As they reached the top the train whistled for the village station, and soon after two persons were seen advancing toward them.

They were Captain Daly and Wizard Will.

The greeting of the mother and sister of the boy was affectionate, and Captain Daly received a cordial welcome, Pearl taking hold of his hand as the four walked back toward the cottage.

"Captain Daly, we have much to thank you for, in securing for us this lovely home," said Mrs. Raymond.

"You like it, then?"

"Oh, yes, so much; and it is bringing me back to health again, and I hope before very long to be my old self, for being an invalid is new to me; but how do you find my boy is doing in his new calling?"

"Splendidly, madam, I assure you, for Will has made his Boy Detectives a strong feature in the Secret Service force of the city."

"I hope that he really earns the very generous salary you pay him, and that it is not your friendship that prompts you to do so much."

"Indeed not, Mrs. Raymond, for I assure you that Wizard Will earns every dollar of his pay, and more, too."

"Why, a boy who did the work of a man as he did in that trip to Maryland, when he discovered the fate of a stolen child, and took the father out to Nebraska where he got the body of his dead son, deserves the wages of a man and far more credit."

Mrs. Raymond seemed delighted at this good report of her son, and arriving at the cottage the four sat down to a most delightful supper, prepared by an old colored woman who lived near, and who was called in on important occasions to do duty, as her husband had care of the place and the horse.

When supper was over, Will called to his sister to accompany him to the village on an er-

rand, while Captain Daly remained with Mrs. Raymond, the two being seated upon the piazza.

The sun was going down and the evening was delightful, while the view of the sail-dotted Sound was grand in the extreme.

For a few moments after the departure of Pearl and her brother neither Mrs. Raymond or her visitor spoke, both seeming to enjoy the view in silence.

At last Mrs. Raymond said:

"Captain Daly, I cannot find words to prove my appreciation of all you have done for me and mine."

"Do not refer to it, my dear madam, for Will earns all he gets, and I trust him as much as I do any of my men, while I congratulate myself often upon having discovered such a perfect natural detective as he has proven himself to be."

"But our home here?"

"I told you how my mother, leaving for the West, left me this little place, and but for your kindly occupying it, I would have had to hire people to remain in it to care for the furniture and look after the horse, cows and chickens; but, as it is, Mrs. Raymond, it costs me nothing, and I know you will let me come for my two weeks in the summer to rest and enjoy this country air and view."

"You are always most welcome, Captain Daly."

"But, Mrs. Raymond, I came out to have a little private talk with you to-night."

Mrs. Raymond looked startled, while she asked, anxiously:

"Has anything gone wrong, Captain Daly?"

"Oh, no; and yet I do not understand certain things that have happened, and came to you for light."

"What can I say or do, sir, to enlighten you?" almost coldly asked the lady.

"I will tell you by saying that to-day Colonel Richard Ivey—"

"Oh, God!" and the words fairly sprung from the woman's lips, while she gazed at the officer in a frightened kind of way, while he, not noticing her interruption, went on:

"—Came into my office to-day, and sought to find you and your children."

"Did you tell him?" gasped the woman.

"Oh, no, I did not do that."

"How I thank you, sir; for I would not have him find me for the world!"

"Do you dislike him so much as that?"

"Oh, no, I do not dislike him; but pray tell me all that he said?"

"He gave me your history, in confidence—that is, told me you had run away from home to marry a scamp who deserted you and your children; and, believing your husband dead, you married him."

"The colonel told me of his meeting with Will, and through him, with you, and how your husband had returned, while he was West, and you were at his country seat at Soldiers' Retreat, on the Jersey coast."

"He said that you had left his home, leaving a letter telling him all, and that he had sought far and wide to find you, and had come to me to help him."

"Captain Daly, what Colonel Ivey made known to you is the truth; but I married him, as I believed, in good faith, and when that wretch came back—he whom I believed to be in his grave—I could but fly from my new home."

"With my husband alive, I could not see Colonel Ivey or allow him to support me, and so I fled from him and hid away, as also I fled from the villain who has made my life a curse, for God only knows what I have suffered, and, but for my brave boy and beautiful girl I would gladly lay down and die, for the past to me, Captain Daly, has been far more bitter than you can ever know!"

"I can feel for you deeply, Mrs. Raymond, but I am sure you can get a divorce from your husband, and then remarry Colonel Ivey, and happiness will come to you."

"No! no! no! I can get no divorce, and I will not, but wait until death ends all, for I cannot but know, Captain Daly, that my health is broken, and in a few more years I can lay down my sorrow in the grave; but then my son will have become a man, and be able to care for his sister as he should."

"But, my dear madam, let me urge that you allow me to tell—"

"Never! I beg of you, I beseech you, do not make known to Colonel Ivey where I am hiding, for it must not be."

"Promise me!"

"First let me ask you if you will not allow the colonel to take Will and—"

"No! no! I cannot consent to it! I will not."

"You are firm in this?"

"As firm as a rock, Captain Daly, so pledge yourself not to tell him where I am."

"I do, Mrs. Raymond, as you so urge it, for it is your secret."

"I thank you, sir, oh! so much! but does Will know aught of this?"

"No more than that Colonel Ivey called, and he would not let me divulge your secret, as he said it was your will to remain hidden, and your secret was sacred."

"The noble boy; but, Captain Daly?"

"Yes, madam."

"If aught befalls me, do you watch over my children, and never allow their father to get possession of them."

"I gladly promise you this, Mrs. Raymond, and I only wish I could catch him trying to take them from you, for you would become a widow very suddenly I assure you, and there would be no doubt about it, for a man who treated you as he has is not fit to live; but here come Will and Pearl," and in the gathering gloom two forms were seen advancing toward the cottage at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER IV.

PEARL'S PLUCK.

WIZARD WILL and his sister attended to their errand in the village, and then started upon their return home.

As they ascended the hill, upon the summit of which was a grove of trees, they saw some one behind them, walking at a quick pace, but they thought nothing of so slight a circumstance as this seeing a pedestrian on the high road from the village.

"Brother, will you let me see the pistol that the chief of police presented to you, if you have it with you?" said Pearl, and as Will's calling necessitated his always going armed, he took the weapon from his pocket, for he happened to have it with him, and handed it to Pearl with the remark:

"It is loaded, sis, so be careful."

"Oh, what a pretty weapon, and it has your name on it, too," said Pearl, as she glanced at the silver-mounted pistol, which was indeed a fine weapon, and bore the boy's name and that of the donor.

As Pearl was glancing at it, with the eyes of an assumed critic, the person who was coming behind them, suddenly increased his step, and, seeing that he was about to pass, the young girl concealed the weapon, not wishing to be seen with it by the stranger.

The man half-passed, glanced quickly into the face of the boy, stopped suddenly and faced him, while he said in a surprised way:

"Ha! we have met before, boy."

"Yes, sir, you are the one who sent me on an errand to the den of the Land Sharks, that I might be entrapped by them and used as a foil for them to get a large reward for a lost boy," was the calm reply of Wizard Will.

"You have a good memory, boy, in fact too good, and I think I had better take you in hand, for it was you that broke up the den of the Land Sharks."

"And I arrest you, sir, for being one of that outlaw band," and Wizard Will threw open his coat, displaying his badges as an officer, while he boldly stepped toward the man.

"By Jove! but you dare much in attempting to arrest me, boy: take that!"

Quick as a flash of light he brought a cane he carried down upon the head of Wizard Will, who dropped as though he had been shot through the heart.

"And you take that, sir!" came in the ringing voice of Pearl, as she threw forward the pistol she had in her hand and pulled trigger.

The sharp report of the weapon caused the man to start and turn, as the bullet cut through his hat, and he seemed about to spring upon the young girl, when a second time she fired, this time the bullet evidently wounding him, as he uttered a sharp cry of pain, clasped his hand to his shoulder, and, as he saw that she was going to fire again he bounded away in ignominious flight, and gaining the road at another point, he sprang into a carriage which just then came in sight and drove off at a rapid pace.

Seeing that he had disappeared, Pearl turned to her brother with an exclamation of alarm, and it turned into a cry of joy as she saw Wizard Will sitting up and gazing at her.

"Why, sis, you are a heroine, and have been my protector, instead of I yours; but how that fellow ran, and we must try and catch him if we can," said Will.

"But, brother," are you not hurt?"
 "No indeed," and Will sprung to his feet, though he staggered a little and added:
 "That man hit me a hard lick, but it only stunned me as I have a very hard head."
 "Now let us go home as quickly as possible, and tell Captain Daly, and maybe we will be able to catch him, for he's the chief of the band of Land Sharks."

"I'm so glad I happened to want to see your pistol, just then, Brother Will," said Pearl as they walked along together.

"It was indeed lucky, sis, for that fellow meant mischief, I am sure, and he had that carriage following him for some purpose."

"Yes, the driver turned as he saw him running toward him and then drew up until he got into the carriage, after which he drove furiously away."

"He was here for no good, Pearl; but I think you have frightened him."

"I hope so, brother Will; but he looked like a gentleman, did he not?"

"Yes, he is a gentlemanly rascal; but here we are at home, and now to tell the chief," and in his quiet way which showed no excitement, Wizard Will told of his adventure, and taking off his hat showed the lump on his head, raised by the blow of the stick.

"You say you recognized him as the Chief of the Land Sharks, Will?" asked Captain Daly, while Mrs. Raymond hastened into the house to get some arnica to bathe Will's head with.

"Yes, sir."

"A tall, handsome man, looking like a Broadway swell?"

"Yes, sir, and the same one who gave me the letter to carry to Night Hawk Jerry at the Land Sharks' den, that I might be seized and forced to represent myself as kidnapped Willie Rossmore, whom they killed, and wished to get a reward through my resemblance to the poor boy."

"You are sure he is the man that gave you the note that led you into the trap?"

"Yes, Captain Daly, there is no mistaking that man."

"If he is the Chief of the Land Sharks, then he is the man they call Edgar Esmond, *alias* Elegant Ed, the King of Cards."

"You think we could capture him, sir?"

"We can but try, and we will go at once to the village telegraph office to work the wires both ways to head him off on the railroad, if he went that way, and also discover if we can which way the carriage went."

"You can spare Will for awhile, Mrs. Raymond?" and the captain turned to Mrs. Raymond, who was holding a folded handkerchief, wet with arnica, upon Will's head.

"Certainly, Captain Daly, it is his duty to go where he can be of service," was the answer.

After again praising Pearl upon her pluck and presence of mind, Captain Daly and Wizard Will took their departure for the village.

But all inquiry there to find out anything about the mysterious stranger was useless, and while Will returned home for the night, the captain took the train for New York, both of them disappointed at their want of success.

CHAPTER V.

A YOUNG ALLY.

It was at the depot that Wizard Will bade good-night to Captain Daly, promising to be in at the office by nine o'clock the following morning.

He had been to the telegraph office, and the two livery stables in the village, along with Captain Daly, and had there closely questioned the drivers of the three country hacks that met the trains at the station to learn if any of them had been hired by a stranger.

But no clew whatever could be gained, and Will turned away, as the train departed, to walk home, about a mile distant from the depot.

He had gone but a short distance when he was met by a boy, whom he had several times seen about the village, and whom he had once befriended when about to be whipped by a man for some slight offense.

"You be Will Raymond, hain't you?" the urchin asked, stepping before the Boy Detective, and gazing at him with a certain admiration, as though he considered him a hero.

"Yes, Foxey," answered Wizard Will, calling the boy by the name he was known in the village, as much on account of the cunning look upon his face, as the shrewd, sly manner in which he gained his living, which was a mystery to all in the village.

"You just went to ther station with Cap'n Daly, a policeman, didn't yer?"

"Yes."

"You was lookin' for a feller as was too fly fer yer, wasn't yer?"

"Yes, but how do you know about it, Foxey?"

"'Cause I hain't allus asleep when my eyes is shut."

"Ah! you know something you wish to tell me?"

"I does."

"Well, Foxey, how much is it worth?"

"I hain't sot no price on it fer you, Billy boy, 'cause I takes to you same as a kitten does ter cream; but I were at the tavern awhile ago, perterdinin' ter be asleep in a cheer, and I jist had my mouth open, same as a fly-trap, but I were listenin' all ther samy to a leetle chin-music two pals were a-gittin' off, and I heerd thet which made me know they was arter you."

"Well, Foxey, out with it, and you shall be well remembered."

"Waal, Billy, I were lyin' low an' half asleep when one feller comed in and sot down near me and begun ter tickle my face with a straw; but Lordy, he cu'dn't tickle through ther dirt and freckles, and so I let him amuse himself."

"Then in come another chap and he sot near t'other one, and he says, says he:

"Cap'n got off all right."

"On ther rail?" axed t'other."

"No, he tuk a boat, as ther driver told him he cu'd go thet way."

"Then ther dog are dead fer ter-night?"

"Nary, fer he says we is ter jist take ther boy in as he goes home from ther train, what he went ter see ther P'lice Cap'n, Ryan Daly, off."

"Does ther kid go back alone?"

"He do."

"Then we'll bag him at ther place whar ther cap'n tracked him and ther gal, and hed ter skip."

"My! didn't thet leetle gal make ther King o' Keerds lift hisself?"

"She did fer a fact, an' I didn't blame him, nuther, Nick."

"No more does I, Buck; but I guesses we'd better git fer ther place whar we is ter tackle ther boy; but will we take ther carriage we hed before?"

"Nary, for we kin steal a boat on the shore and go up thet way."

"Then, Billy Boy, ther two pals lighted out, and I jist woke up and come ter look you up, fer I hain't no fool ef I does have fits, and they means biz ag'in' you."

"Foxey, you are a trump," said Wizard Will.

"Waal, I wish you'd play me to win, Billy, fer I'm a loser in all I undertakes," was the reply of the odd youth; who, about fourteen, was well grown for his age, freckled face, by no means clean or handsome looking, and whose worldly goods consisted of a coarse ticking shirt, a pair of pants, a belt and an old hat.

Where he lived no one knew, and ever ready to help any one in work, he was not disliked.

Of his antecedents he had nothing to say, and drifting into the village one day, from whence no one knew, he had since been known as a street waif, unkempt, uncared for and unknown.

"Foxey, do you mind helping me out of this scrape?"

"Jist try me."

"Will you play that you are me?"

"Billy, you make me larff, 'deed you does."

"I mean it, for I wish you to put on my hat and coat after we get out of the village, and walk along the road toward home, while I will follow in the footpath near the highway and be on hand when needed."

"Billy, you wants me ter be tuk fer you?"

"Yes."

"Yer'll trust me with yer coat and hat?"

"Oh, yes, for I have no fear of you, Foxey."

"You thinks I kin play yer O. K.?"

"Oh, yes."

"Waal, I hain't sich a fool as I looks, Billy, and I kin play ther light comedy, pretendin' ter be you, while you does ther heavy biz, and comes ter my rescoo; but, Billy?"

"Yes, Foxey."

"Don't you be too far away, fer ef them pals escapes with me, they'll kill me when they finds out they has been traded off."

"I'll be on hand, Foxey."

"Is you weighted?"

"How do you mean?"

"Has you got your gun?"

"Oh, yes, I am armed."

"Hain't got no arsenal you cu'd lend me?"

"I have but this one pistol with me, Foxey."

"Waal, I guesses you kin use it, ef need be, so let us git toward ther spot whar ther fun are ter take place."

So saying, the two boys moved on together, skirting the streets of the village and gaining

the highway at a point a quarter of a mile from the top of the hill, where Foxey had said the two men were to await to kidnap Wizard Will.

As they reached the wood Will said:

"Now, Foxey, it is moonlight, and in my coat and hat you look like me, so put them on."

"My! but I wish I had a mirror ter gaze on myself, fer I knows I does look han'some," said Foxey, as he disguised himself in the coat and hat.

"Now, Foxey, I'll take the footpath there, and follow, so start," and, imitating to perfection the walk of Wizard Will, the Village Waif, started off on his mission as the ally of the Boy Detective.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRAPPERS TRAPPED.

ALONG the broad highway leading from the village, and running parallel with the Sound, and not much more than a stone's throw from it, was a footpath, a few yards distant, which had been made by persons in the village making a daily pilgrimage to the hilltop to obtain a sight of the grand view that could be seen from that point.

Bareheaded and coatless, Wizard Will sprung into the path, as Foxey set off in the center of the highway.

It was moonlight, the moon being new, however, and giving just light enough to see a person well at a short distance away.

Proud of the confidence which Wizard Will had placed in him, Foxey went along in exact imitation of the young detective's walk, and soon began to ascend the hill.

As he neared the top the trees grew thicker, and there was a shadow cast over the roadway.

A moment more and he gained the summit, and his eyes fell upon the white cottage of the Raymonds in the valley below.

Just then out of the shadows of the roadside, one on either hand sprung two men, and, in spite of himself, and expecting just such an act, Foxey started.

"Ho, boy, you are our game, so no nonsense!" cried one of the men gruffly, and he grasped the boy's arm.

"Who are you, and what does yer want?" cried Foxey in a loud tone that he meant should reach Will's ears.

"We wants you, and we has got yer, so keep thet mouth shut or I'll shut it fer yer," answered one of the men, and the other said:

"Now, Buck, fer ther boat!"

"Halt there! you are my prisoners!" and clear and startling was the voice of Wizard Will as he sprung into the road, a pistol in his hand.

"By Heaven! it's ther leetle game rooster hisself."

"Catch him, Buck!" cried one of the men, and at the command his comrade sprung forward, as he drew a pistol, and called out:

"Drop that weepen, boy, or I'll use mine!"

The answer came in a flash and sharp report from Will's pistol, and the man Buck went down in his tracks without a groan, while his companion, with an oath, drew a weapon with one hand, while with the other he still firmly grasped Foxey's arm.

"None o' thet," shouted Foxey, and he knocked the weapon from his hand, at the same time throwing his arms about him with a deathlike hug and calling out:

"I've got him, Billy."

But already had Wizard Will reached his side, and thrusting his pistol into the man's face he said:

"Surrender, or go as your pal did!"

"You has got me," growled the man, making no resistance, for he saw that Wizard Will was not to be trifled with.

"Foxey!"

"Yes, Billy."

"Feel in my breast pocket and get a pair of bracelets you will find there."

Foxey slipped his hand into the coat, which he still wore and drew out the handcuffs, which he clasped upon the brawny wrists of his prisoner without waiting for further orders, while he said:

"I knows how these works, for I hes worn 'em some myself."

"Now Foxey, will you run back to the village and ask Constable Ross to come here as quickly as he can, and to bring a wagon with him?"

"Yes, but Billy, is you sart'in thet galoot are dead?" and Foxey pointed to the prostrate and motionless form of the man who had fallen under Wizard Will's fire.

"Yes, I shot him in the head, Foxey, to save my own life."

"I hes seen dead men walk, Billy Boy."

"Well, see for yourself, Foxey."

The Waif stepped forward, and bent over the man, and after a moment said:

"It's a fact, Billy, he's a subject fer ther coroner; you shoots to hit, and hits ter kill."

"I'll fetch ther constable and a bearse," and, throwing off the hat and coat of Wizard Will, the strange boy darted away on his errand like a deer, leaving Wizard Will alone with the prisoner and the dead.

Hardly had Foxey disappeared, before the prisoner said:

"Boy, you are Will Raymond, hain't yer?"

"Yes."

"What has you ag'in' us thet you has shot my pard and has got ther irons on me?"

"You sought to waylay me and carry me off."

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"Cusses on that wharf rat! he told yer."

"Never mind how I found it out; but I knew it, and you were trapped where you expected to entrap."

"Well, you did it up slick, and I were not one to believe a boy could do what you did."

"Forewarned is forearmed, you know."

"Well, let us see if we can't trade."

"What do you mean?"

"You is not rich is you?"

"No."

"Well, if you jist let me slip away, and say I got off when you wasn't looking, I'll do the handsome thing by you, for you has but to name the money you considers me worth."

"First tell me who it was that told you to kidnap me."

"Elegant Ed, if you knows who he is."

"Not exactly."

"Well, he are the prime Satan o' a band o' devils thet lives by our wits."

"What could he make by kidnapping me?"

"Thet I don't know; but I guess he does."

"Did he come here for that purpose?"

"All I knows is thet he told that poor dead pal o' mine and me to meet him there in ther village, and we did it, we coming by rail and he by carriage, and when he met us, we drove out this way in ther vehicle."

"Ther cap'n he walked on ahead, and we came behind in ther carriage, and he tackled you and a leetle gal jist about here, and the leetle one opened on him sharp with her gun, and he skipped lively, and jined us mad as a wet hen."

"He sent ther carriage off, told my pal to go to the tavern and wait, and he and me went down to the water, where he took a boat back to ther city, after telling me to keep an eye on you."

"Thet I did, and seein' you go to ther station with Cap'n Daly, I made for ther tavern, picked up my pal, and you knows what hev tuk place right here; but ef you intends ter sell me, name yer sum."

"What will you give me to let you go?"

"How much do you ask for me?"

"Is your freedom worth a thousand dollars?"

"By Jove! but you does hold me high."

"The gallows will hold you higher," was the significant response.

"Ugh! don't talk about it, for you makes me shiver; but I'll pay you the money."

"Hand it over!"

"I hain't got but a hundred with me, and Buck thar has got about as much more, so you'll have to trust me for the balance."

"No, I'll not trust; pay or stay."

"I c'u'd pay you if I was in the city."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Yes."

"I'll take you down yonder in the woods and let you stay until the constable and his party departs, and then I will come for you and take you in my sail-boat to the city, where you can pay me the money."

"Done!"

"Come," and Wizard Will led the way down the hill for over a hundred yards.

Here he halted near a small tree, and with his silk handkerchief and cravat he tied the man's handcuffed wrists close to a limb.

"I didn't think you'd tie me," growled the man.

"I don't wish to lose my reward," Wizard Will answered, and telling the prisoner he would return for him as soon as the constable had come and gone, he started on his way for the spot where he had left the dead man lying where he had fallen.

As he reached the highway he heard the rumble of wheels approaching, and soon after a wagon appeared in sight, coming rapidly up the hill toward where he stood.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOY'S STORY.

FOXLEY, the Waif, had lost no time in performing his errand.

He knew every spot in the village, and just where the inhabitants could be found at certain hours.

He hailed the baggage-wagon on his way and told it to go to the tavern and it would get a job, and then he went by the coroner's, told him what had happened, and ran on to the tavern, where he was sure of finding Constable Ross, who was fond of his little mug of ale and the admiration bestowed upon him by the bar-room loungers.

The expressman was at the tavern as Foxey entered, and the boy asked him to call the constable outside for a moment.

When the officer beheld who it was that wanted him, and felt that he had been interrupted in the midst of one of his funny stories, he was aggrieved and said sharply:

"What does this mean, for I was told that a gentleman wished to see me?"

"A gentleman does, Officer Ross, fer I sent after yer, and I has that to tell that will make yer red hair rise," returned Foxey.

"What is it, boy, for I've got no time for nonsense."

"No, you are too busy drinkin' beer and swoopin' lies ter do yer duty, so I'll telegraph a New York policeman ter come out and git ther job."

Constable Ross was angry, but he felt that the boy was in earnest about having more information, and that a New York policeman should capture his honors was something he could not tolerate even in thought, so he said in a coaxing way:

"Come, Foxey, out with what you have to say," and changing his tone, he continued:

"If you don't, I'll take you in."

"No you won't, Constable Ross, for I do not fear you, as I am an honest boy, if I am a vagabond."

"I have come here to tell you that there is a dead man lying up the road, and I ordered a wagon to go there, sir, and ther cowroner is comin' there now, as you sees."

"A dead man?" gasped the constable.

"Yes, and he was shot down slick as fallin' off a log; but if you is ready to go there, get the cowroner to collect his jury ter sit on ther body, and I'll lead yer to ther identical spot."

"Tell me about it, good boy Foxey," pleaded the constable.

"Let him as did it tell yer, for my biz is simply ter show yer."

"You are sure the man is dead, Foxey?"

"No man as is kilt is dead until ther cowroner sits on him ter show that he is, and how it was did, for that's law; but fer my part I'd say he was very dead; but yer is losin' time, so let's git."

The constable now stood face to face with a tragedy, the first in his life, and he was nervous; but the cowroner, who was an undertaker, was cool about it, and the express wagon, under his direction was soon filled with a jury and the party drove to the scene of the tragedy.

Foxey being a hero in the eyes of all, and torturing them by his silence regarding what had occurred.

As they reached the spot Wizard Will stepped forward and greeted the constable, calling him to one side.

"I believe you know, Constable Ross, that I am an officer?" he said.

"Yes, young man, I was so informed officially, but told to keep it a secret."

"Well, I wish it to so remain a secret, as also the fact that there was a prisoner here, who has gone, though I feel confident that I can recapture him, so say nothing about him."

"As you say, sir," and the constable's respect for the boy officer was increasing with his awe of the dead body, at which he cast furtive glances.

"I will now make known the story for the benefit of the coroner," said Wizard Will, and advancing toward the body he continued:

"Gentlemen, I wish to state that Captain Daly, of the New York police, who is a friend of mine, came out to have supper with my mother this evening, and while he was at the cottage, I went to the village on an errand, accompanied by my little sister."

"On our way back we were overtaken by a well-dressed stranger, whom I recognized as one of a band of outlaws know as Land Sharks, and I knew him as one who once entrapped me for some purpose of his own."

"He dealt me a blow with a cane he carried, which felled me to the ground, and what the re-

sult would have been I do not know, had not my little sister, who had my pistol, opened fire on him.

"He fled down the hill, waving to a carriage that was coming up, and it turned quickly, he sprung in and drove rapidly away."

"Captain Daly tried to track the man, but failed, and I went to the train to see him off, and on my way back met Foxey, who had heard a plot of two men to carry me off."

"This brave youth told me what he had heard, and that the men were to waylay me here on my way home, so I asked him to put on my coat and hat, and pretend to be me, which he did."

"I followed along the footpath, saw the men seize Foxey, and I came to the rescue, and I shot that man in self-defense, the other having gone down the hillside, but I think he can be recaptured."

Foxey never winked as Wizard Will told the story, implying the escape of the other man.

Why he did not find him there he did not know; but he said nothing to implicate Will.

"Coroner, I know all about this youth, and I accept his story as truth, and I hope you will so instruct your jury," the constable said in a pompous way.

"If you need other information, Mr. Coroner, you know where I can be found," Wizard Will remarked, and he gave Foxey a sign which that worthy lad rightly interpreted.

"Had we not better try and hunt down the one who escaped?" asked one of the party.

"I shall go to the city to-night and report the affair to Captain Daly, and if the man is to be taken, he will do it," answered Wizard Will, and, with the excuse that his mother would be anxious about him, he departed leaving the body in the hands of the officials.

He had not gone a hundred yards from the spot when a form suddenly appeared before him in the road.

It was Foxey, who had slipped off and made a circuit to head him off.

"You forgot one thing, Billy."

"Well?"

"They'll want to hear my story, and they'll hold me as a witness."

"Ah, yes; you go back and I'll return at once."

This Will did, and said:

"Mr. Constable, I came back to say that I'll be responsible for the reappearance of Foxey."

"The boy's already skipped," growled the constable.

"I hain't skipped far," and Foxey stepped out of the shadow of the trees.

"Ah! I supposed you had run off; but now we've got you, we'll put you in the jug and hold you until you're wanted to tell your story before the jury."

"I don't want ter go ter jail."

"Nor shall you, Foxey, for I will be responsible for you."

"You did the killin', and you is but a boy, so I thinks you two should be jailed," one of the party said gruffly.

"That's but square dealing," another replied.

"Jail 'em both until we get the facts," said a third.

"I think," the coroner remarked slowly, "that we should hold the boys."

"I think not, and Constable Ross will agree with me, coroner," calmly said Wizard Will.

"So I will, for it's all right, as I know, and if he says he will be responsible for Foxey, I'm satisfied," Constable Ross returned.

"I thank you, Officer Ross. Good-night, gentlemen; come, Foxey, with me," and Wizard Will raised his hat and walked away on the road homeward, followed by the delighted Foxey.

"Did he get away, Billy?" asked Foxey, as they reached a safe distance from the crowd.

"No, but I let them believe that he did."

"I have him yonder in the bushes, tied to a tree, and, as soon as the crowd leaves the hill, we will get him and go in my sail-boat to New York."

"You are a good sailor, I believe?"

"None better, Billy."

"Ah! I hear the wagon going back to the village, so now we will go after our man," and Wizard Will led the way around the hillside to the thicket where he had secured his prisoner to await his return for him.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN DEADLY PERIL.

THE man, Buck, was found, tied to a tree, just as Wizard Will had left him, for the young detective had secured him in a way against all possibility of escape.

"You've got back," growled the prisoner.

"Yes."
 "And you've brought that imp of Satan with you?"
 "Yes, if you mean Foxey."
 "He got me into this trouble."
 "And he got me out of trouble, so is entitled to part of the money you are to give me."
 "I don't care what you does with it, after you let me go."

"Well, come on now, and we will take the boat for New York," and Wizard Will led the way down toward a small inlet, which was not far from his home, and where he kept the snug little sloop-yacht of three tons, and the row-boats that belonged to the cottage.

"Now, Foxey, we will tie the prisoner here, and you can get sail upon the yacht, while I run up to the cottage to see mother, and tell her I am going," and Will hastened up to the house, where he found his mother and sister sitting up awaiting him, and anxious about his long stay.

In a few words he told them all that had happened and that he intended to take his prisoner at once to New York, though just why he did not say.

Mrs. Raymond hastily prepared a basket of lunch for them, in her kindness of heart not forgetting that the prisoner might need food, and promising to telegraph his mother of his safe arrival, Wizard Will left the cottage and hastened down to the shore.

He found the yacht with her mainsail and jib up, and Foxey and the prisoner already on board.

Casting off, Will took the tiller, and, under the pressure of the six-knot breeze that was blowing the small craft shot out from the harbor and was headed down the sound toward New York.

The moon, in its first quarter, had now sunk from sight below the horizon, and the waters looked dark after the loss of its silvery light; but Wizard Will had several times made the run before in daylight, in the little boat, and often on the steamer that stopped at the village landing, so that he knew the way pretty well, for he had always made it a point to study the route, both going and coming.

The wind freshened as they reached open water, and being fair for the run, the sloop went along at a lively rate, while Wizard Will sat at the helm, with Foxey and the prisoner to windward.

"At this rate we'll reach the city afore night," said the prisoner, as the little yacht went bowling merrily along.

"That is what I am anxious to do," was Will's answer.

"And so am I, for I hain't often seen around the town by daylight."

"I do not doubt that," and Will laughed, while Foxey remarked:

"You don't look like a deacon, old man."

Just as Riker's Island loomed up ahead, two brigs with bows were seen coming toward them, and Will luffed sharp to give them a wide berth, for the wind was now blowing very fresh, and the waves were rising rapidly.

But in a moment more two sailing vessels appeared dead in the course, and it was evident that they were racing.

To cross the bows of either, Will saw was impossible, so he determined to put about and risk running ahead of the far more slowly moving tugs with the vessels in tow.

This maneuver he attempted, so far as putting his boat about, but he had not taken into consideration the swiftly running tide, which would have borne him directly down upon the bows, in spite of all he could do.

Realizing this, he quickly went about again, determined to cross the bows of the nearest schooner and then luff up to let the other go by, if they did not yield to him the right of way.

"We are in a pickle, Billy," coolly said Foxey, taking in the situation at a glance.

"Yes; but I think one of those vessels will yield us the way."

"If they don't, we'll be run into, so just loosen these irons, as I don't want ter go down like this," the prisoner said, excitedly.

"Schooner ahoy!" shouted Will, and his voice evidently reached the ears of those on the deck of the vessel he hailed.

Still no answer came, and once more he hailed, but with like result.

Just then the boy saw that their peril was great, and yet he felt that he must risk going across the bows of the nearest schooner, and it could be done if the helmsman of the craft would fall off a few points.

"We'll make it," cried Foxey, as he saw they were shooting across the schooner's bows, and some little distance ahead of them.

To leeward, and astern of the schooners, were the tugs with their tows, and unless the sloop could shoot in between the two vessels, she must be run down.

Just as all on board the little yacht felt that they had made the run across in safety, the schooner luffed sharp and dashed directly into the craft, cutting her down with a loud crash. There were loud cries, and orders, on board the schooner, as though her crew, taken up with her race, had not seen the yacht, or seeing her, had left her to shift for herself, and then the large vessel passed on in the darkness, unheeding the calls for help.

"Foxey, can you swim?" called out Wizard Will, as they found themselves in the water.

"Swimming's my strong holt, Billy," came the cheering answer.

"Then help me with this man, for the handcuff keys are in my coat-pocket, and that's at the bottom."

"Yes, for God's sake don't let me drown, boys, for I'm helpless, utterly helpless!" groaned the prisoner.

"Do you swim?" asked Will, as he upheld the man.

"Yes, if I was only free."

"Then help us all you can to hold you up, or your fate is certain," said Wizard Will, as he held up the prisoner on one side, while Foxey did the same upon the other.

In the mean time the danger of their situation increased, for the tide was bearing them directly down under the bows of the coming tows, while in the darkness, and above the splashing of the waters, it was not likely that they would either be seen or their cries heard on board the tugs, which came puffing along toward them.

CHAPTER IX.

SAFE IN PORT.

"Tug ahoy! ahoy!"

Loud rung out the voice of Wizard Will, in an endeavor to arouse those on the coming vessels to a sense of their peril.

But no response came, and Foxey sent his voice out over the waters in a loud hail.

But still no response, or sign that they were heard by those whom they hailed.

"Say, old man, you hain't doing nothin', so s'pose you try your voice on 'em," said Foxey to the prisoner, who was becoming a heavy weight upon the hands of the two boys.

"I've got a voice what can reach 'em, I guesses, and strange I never thought of it," and, after so saying the prisoner took a long breath and then hailed in a voice that fairly startled the two boys, for Foxey remarked:

"That's no voice, man, it's a fog-horn," Foxey said.

"Well, it answered the purpose, for hark!" Wizard Will replied, as there came across the waters.

"Ay ay, we are looking for you, for we saw that cowardly skipper run you down."

The man with a voice like a fog-horn gave a shout of joy at this, for thief, perhaps worse, though he was, he loved life.

A moment after there came the jingle of a bell and the tug came to a standstill, while the wrecked trio swam toward it, and willing hands soon drew them on board.

In a word Wizard Will told the captain of the tug that he was an officer, carrying a prisoner to the city, and showing his authority, asked for a boat, for the tide being in their favor, they could reach the city in a couple of hours.

The captain told them they should have a yawl, which also carried a sail, being cat-rigged, and lending them some dry clothing, soon after boarding the tug, the three were once more on their way to the city.

It was early morning when they ran in to a pier, and Wizard Will sent Foxey ashore after a hack, while he waited with his prisoner.

Before very long Foxey returned, and leaving the boat in charge of a wharf watchman, they entered the hack and Will said:

"Driver, take us to the — Police Precinct."

"Ho, youngster, none of that, for your bargain with me was to take me to where I hang out," cried the prisoner.

"I made no bargain with you, my man, though you offered me a price for your freedom."

"I seemed to consent for a purpose of my own, to keep you out of the hands of the village constable, and I shall take you to Captain Daly, who will then decide whether you are to have your liberty or not, if you agree to the price we offer you."

"Boy, if I had a knife I'd kill you," savagely said the prisoner.

"I do not doubt it; but if you do not keep

quiet and submit, I shall use the butt of my revolver over your head to make you do so," was the Boy Detective's stern threat.

"Yes, we've got you, old man, so take it easy, for jawin' an' clawin' hain't goin' ter help yer," Foxey replied.

The prisoner uttered an oath and settled back on the front seat of the hack, which now drove rapidly away toward the station.

"Well, Wizard Will, who have you got there?" called out the sergeant in charge, as Will entered with his prisoner, and Foxey.

"A prisoner, Sergeant Belt, that Captain Daly will wish to see, so please give him good quarters."

"I'll do it; but who's the other?" and Sergeant Belt looked at Foxey who met his gaze with an unmoved stare.

"My friend Foxey, for I know him by no other name, sergeant."

"I am called Foxey, the Waif, and Foxey the Vagabond, so take your choice, sergeant," was the cool reply of the boy.

"You're a daisy, my lad; but I'll bet you are honest and have got grit!" and Sergeant Belt seemed impressed with the strange boy, and, as an officer led the prisoner away, he continued:

"You look as though you had had a hard time of it, Will."

"I have, and that I am here now I owe it to my friend Foxey; but we are as hungry as wolves, so we will go and get some breakfast and be back in ample time to see the captain."

"Come, Foxey," and Will led the way down the street to the shop of an enterprising Jew, who was opening his door in the hope of catching an early customer.

He succeeded, for, as he kept all kinds of clothing, Will entered with Foxey, for they were wet and miserable, as they had only been given heavy pea-jackets by the crew of the tug.

When they emerged from the shop half an hour afterward the Jew's face wore a pleasant smile, while the boys wore a new suit of clothes each, and Foxey was commenting upon his improved appearance by saying:

"If I was a gal, Billy, an' seen sich a nice young man as I is at the present minute, I'd get dead in love with him."

"Who would have thought that Jew c'd make a gentleman out o' a vagabond sich as I was?"

"But how he lied to you, Billy, when he said that coat fitted you, for he had the gathers all up in his hand in the back; but when he caught sight of your badges then he came out with the proper garments very sudden."

"Now, when I get my hair chopped, and gits an emetic to take these freckles off my face, then I'll be sweet enough to die and have wings."

"Won't I, Billy?"

"We'll get your hair chopped, as you call it, Foxey, after breakfast, for I'm hungry, and I expect you are."

"Billy, I'm allus hungry, and don't you forgit it; but what does you intend to make of me? for I'm yourn to kill!"

"I intend to make you a member of the Boy Detectives' League, Foxey," was the reply of Wizard Will, as he turned into a restaurant where he knew they could get a good breakfast, while Foxey, awe-struck at his good fortune, followed meekly behind.

CHAPTER X.

A VAGABOND.

AFTER a hearty meal, and having been in the hands of the barber and shoemaker, as well as the clothier and hatter, Foxey appeared like a different person indeed, and the smile on his face was one of seeming rapture.

"Billy, you are a brick, and no mistake, and I'm yer pard until ther end," said Foxey, as the two walked on toward the precinct, after the complete metamorphosis of the vagabond boy.

"Well, Foxey, we are friends, and I wish you to be one of my League of Boy Detectives, as I told you; but now tell me where you live?"

"Right where I happen ter be, Billy, when I'm breathing."

"You mean anywhere?"

"Yes, anywhere, everywhere and nowhere—I'm an out and out vagabond."

"Where do you get your meals?"

"The one I got just now was the first square one, at which I sat like a gentleman, for a long time; the rest I got as I could pick them up here and there."

"And you had no lodging-place?"

"Yes, under a tree, in a barn, on the deck of a craft, or where else I could find a soft plank."

"Where are your parents?"
"Billy, don't ask me any questions about myself, for I cannot answer you."

"You found me a waif, Foxey, the Vagabond Boy, so look upon me as such, if you are willing to give me your friendship, for more I cannot tell you."

He had suddenly dropped his slang, and rude way of talking, and had spoken in a different tone, and with the words of one who had been reared among refined people.

Will was deeply impressed by his words and manner, and answered:

"Forgive me, Foxey, but I meant my questions in kindness."

"We will be the best of friends, and here is my hand on it, while you must go home with me to-night, and it shall be your home as long as you desire to remain."

Foxey suddenly resumed his old manner again, and said:

"Thankee, Billy, I'll go with you, for the night, at least, and then I'll get down to work as ther Vagabond Detective, and you bet I know the rat-holes in this town, for I've been around a trifle in my day, early in the morning as it is yet in my life."

They had now reached the police precinct, and as they entered the private office, for Will had full sway there, Captain Daly came in.

"Well, Will, what news?" said the captain pleasantly.

"I have a prisoner for you, Captain Daly."

"Not this fine-looking young man that looks as though his parents kept him in a band-box?" and he glanced at Foxey, who said:

"Didn't I tell you, Billy, I was a stunner?"

"Ther cap'n's struck on my shape."

Wizard Will laughed, and the captain too, for he saw that his Boy Detective had picked up somewhere an original character.

"Captain Daly, this is my friend Foxey."

"Other name?" asked the chief.

"The Vagabond," promptly replied Foxey.

"Yes, Captain Daly, he is known as Foxey the Waif, and the Vagabond, and he lives in our village—"

"When I'm there, Billy."

"Yes, he lives 'most anywhere; but he did me a good turn last night, and I have a most important report to make to you."

"I'm glad to meet you, Foxey, and to find you in such good company as I do; be seated, please," and Captain Daly gave his hand to the friendless youth, who was at once won by his kindly manner.

Then Wizard Will told the story, as the reader knows it, of what had occurred, from Foxey's meeting him to their appearance in the station.

"This is a remarkable story, Will; but I am glad you acted so promptly, and not only saved your life, but captured your second man after dropping one."

"You are sure he is dead?"

"Oh, yes, sir, there is no doubt of that."

"It is a pity, my boy, to stain your young hands with human blood, as you have had to do; but then you have been in the discharge of your duty and have done it well."

"But what was your motive in letting Officer Ross believe your prisoner had escaped?"

"Well, sir, he offered me a thousand dollars to let him go, and the idea struck me that if I got him here we could force him to betray the band, even if we had to give him his freedom for doing so, and I led him to believe I intended to go with him to get the bribe, until we reached the city."

"A brilliant idea, Will, and we will try its effect on the prisoner; but now, Foxey, let me congratulate you upon your pluck, and if Will had not made you one of his League, I would give you service with me, for I see that there is that in you to make a man."

"I'm poor but honest, sir," Foxey answered with a smile, while Captain Daly asked:

"Could you get no clew to the vessel that ran you down?"

"It was a schooner, sir, and a very trim-looking craft, and I saw upon her bows the name Arrow."

"Yes, and that arrow went true to the dead center of our boat," said Foxey.

"Her name is something to know, and I will see if she cannot be found out, for her captain is a heartless wretch, to run on as he did, after driving your boat under."

"Now we will see your prisoner," and calling an officer, Captain Daly ordered him to bring up Wizard Will's prisoner.

A few moments after Buck, evil-faced, scowling and white as death, was led into the room, his wrists still in irons, and his appearance that of a man who knew his danger and dreaded the alternative.

CHAPTER XI.

PUT TO THE TEST.

"WELL, sir, what is your name?" sternly said Captain Daly, turning his eagle eyes upon the prisoner.

"Buck, my pals calls me."

"Have you no other?"

"I'm satisfied with that name, and I think you ought ter be," was the insolent response.

"Well, I will be for the present, so tell me the name of your pal, whom this young gentleman was compelled to kill last night?"

"I knowed him only as Nick."

"You intended to kidnap this youth, I believe?"

"That was about it."

"For what purpose?"

"Cause we had orders."

"Who from?"

"Ther cap'n."

"What captain?"

"Our boss."

"You mean the King of Cards?"

"The man started and said:

"Yes."

"He is also called Elegant Ed?"

"Yes."

"He was up in the country with you, yesterday?"

"Yes."

"But left?"

"He did, and lively, for he got a wound in his shoulder from that plucky little gal as was with that young gamecock."

"And left you and your pal Nick to do his work?"

"That's just the size of it."

"And you failed?"

"These irons on my wrists kinder look so, don't they, cap'n?"

"And the bullet in your dead pal's brain makes it look more so, don't it?"

"For a fact; but I'm doubtful as to who's the best off, me or Nick?"

"That depends upon yourself, for, vile as you are, there may be freedom for you, if you obey orders, and tell me what I demand of you."

"You want me to tell all about my pals?"

"Yes, and why the captain of your gang sought to kidnap this youth."

"I don't know, but I guesses he thought there was money in the boy, though he didn't tell Nick or me why he wanted him."

"You are a member of the band of scoundrels known as the Land Sharks?"

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"It's catchin' before hangin', cap'n."

"You mean that I've got to prove that you are a Land Shark?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've got you on one count."

"What's that?"

"Kidnapping, or attempting it."

"I can stand the term in prison I gits for that."

"How about standing the time you get for being a Land Shark?"

"I hain't said I was one yet."

"I know that you are."

"Can you prove it?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"This young gentleman has just handed me this slip of paper, and he has written upon it as follows:

"Now that I see that man's face well, I will take oath that he was one of the Land Sharks who was in the room the day I was sent by their chief to their den with a letter."

"Well, what if he does swear to it?"

"His testimony alone will convict you."

"Well, that will add a longer time of imprisonment for me."

"It will be more than that, sir!" sternly said Wizard Will.

"What does yer mean, boy?"

"Do you deny that you are a Land Shark?"

"You say you seen me there?"

"Yes."

"And will swear to it?"

"Yes."

"Then I might as well own up, for I'll stand no more chance."

"Then you admit that you are a member of the Land Shark Band?" asked Captain Daly.

"Yes, I own up."

"Captain Daly," called out Wizard Will, as he arose and approached the prisoner.

"Well, Will?"

"I pronounce this man a murderer," and Wizard Will spoke with deep impressiveness, as he laid his hand heavily upon the shoulder of

the prisoner, who turned livid and shrunk from his touch with a look of horror.

Captain Daly and Foxey both started at this direct charge, while the former asked quickly:

"Do you mean it, Will?"

"Yes, sir, every word of it; this man is a murderer," and Wizard Will spoke with the same impressive way as before.

"No! no! no! you cannot prove that!" cried the trembling prisoner.

"I can," came in resolute tones from the boy's lips.

"Can you prove it, Will?"

"Yes, Captain Daly."

"Do so, and he shall hang."

The prisoner glared at the Boy Detective like a wild beast, while every particle of color had left his face.

"Captain Daly, I know that the rule of the Land Sharks is that no man can become a member of their band unless he is a murderer."

"This secret holds them all together."

The prisoner groaned as this startling secret was made known, and his whole form quivered with terror.

"You, sir, confessed yourself but now a Land Shark, so your doom is sealed, and you go to the gallows," said Captain Daly, while Foxey remarked:

"And it's your tongue that will hang you, for it ran away with your brains."

"Now, my man, you know your fate, and it remains with you to say whether you will save your own life or not?"

"How can I?" eagerly asked the prisoner.

"By betraying your comrades," was the earnest response of Wizard Will.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRAITOR.

THE response of Wizard Will seemed to startle the prisoner, and it was evidently a surprise to both Captain Daly and Foxey.

The man looked at the Boy Detective with a glance that seemed to be full of fright, and then said in a low tone.

"Do you mean it, boy?"

"I do."

"You expect me to betray the Land Sharks?"

"I do."

"I'd better stand trial and serve my time in prison."

"You forget that you do not go to prison."

"What?"

"You will be tried for murder and go to the gallows."

"Great Lord!"

"Yes, you will have to hang," said Captain Daly.

"No one can prove murder against me," said the man sullenly.

"Do not be too sure of that, for I can," was Wizard Will's rejoinder, and there was a look in the boy's face which the prisoner did not half like, and more, Captain Daly and Foxey seemed to think that he knew more than he told.

"It will be death to me if I betray them."

"It will be death to you if you do not."

"I'm in a bad box," he said in a voice quivering.

"You will be in a box if you don't do as we demand."

"Boy, do you know the laws of our band?"

"Yes; that a member must have taken human life and make his secret known."

"You are right, but there is another law."

"Yes, that you will be killed if you betray, by act or word your comrades."

"That's it."

"But you need not remain here to be killed."

"They'll track me down."

"I guess not, my man, if we once get our clutches upon them."

"Come, I'll give you your liberty, a thousand dollars in money and a ticket to some European port, where you can seek other scenes of business," said Captain Daly.

"And you'll hang me if I don't?"

"Sure."

"I'll take the chances."

"And turn informer?"

"Yes."

"You are wise; Wizard Will, the prisoner is in your hands," and Captain Daly turned to his desk and began to look over his morning mail.

Will got a pad of paper and a pencil, and said:

"Now to your information, my man?"

"What pledge have I that you won't deceive me?"

"Captain Daly's word."

"You mean it, cap'n?"

"Yes, I pledge myself to set free a man who should be hanged, yourself, for the information you give that leads to the capture of the band of Land Sharks."

"I'll have to risk it."

"You know your alternative, sir, so can do as you please."

"And I can get a thousand dollars and the ocean ticket to boot?"

"Yes."

"Get your pencil ready, young fellow, and pump me," and the prisoner turned again to Wizard Will.

"Where is the den?"

"The same place as afore."

"Where I found you?"

"Yes."

"You were a bold lot to go back there," said Captain Daly, turning from his desk.

"It was safer."

"How?"

"Well, you see we had that den all arranged, and of course it was better, while we knew you'd never suspect us of going back there, and so we went."

"But I did half-suspect it, and had the place watched."

"Detectives and police hain't always quite as smart as they thinks they is."

"Well, what else have you to say?"

"That's our den, cap'n."

"You are either deceiving me, or my watchman is."

"He's all right, only he don't know the ropes."

"Come, out with what you have to say."

"Well, after this boy got the drop on us, we lighted out, and in a hurry."

"The next day your police held the dive, cap'n, and the owner of the place was so disgusted to think he had had Land Sharks for tenants, he said he'd sell out for what he could git."

"And he did?"

"Yes, he sold out, and our cap'n was the buyer, for he had some leetle ready cash."

"Then he pretended to turn the house inter a honest tenement, and he rented ther rooms to various folks, as your officers reported."

"But he had made certain improvements, which the police saw him doing, for in his disguise no one knew him."

"Them improvements was for our safety, and we had a chimney shaft built that run down into the cellar, and that was our way out, if surprised."

"A tunnelway then went from the cellar down under the street to the cellar of another house, a block away, which the King o' Keerds also bought, and fixed up to suit himself."

"He is a bold fellow, and a genius," said Captain Daly.

"He is all of that, and he was that smart, cap'n, that he sold his houses for cash, to a party who saw that they were full of good paying tenants, so that if he was found out and raided, he would not lose the property."

"Well?" and Captain Daly glanced at Will and Foxey in his surprise.

"And another party owns the houses now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he in any way connected with your band?"

"Not he, for he's a big church member up-town."

"When is your band generally in the den?"

"Day and night some of 'em is there; but you are more likely to catch all there about daylight in the morning."

"You know this second house which serves as an entrance, by way of the cellar and tunnel to the one you live in?"

"Oh yes, for I goes and comes that way."

"You can lead us that way?"

"Nary, cap'n, but I kin give you the information and words, so that you'll get there."

"Why will you not lead us?"

"I'd never get the thousand and the ticket."

"Why not?"

"Because, soon as I was seen with the blue coats, I'd be filled full of lead."

"Ah! I see; but you will direct Captain Raymond here how to get there?"

"Who's Cap'n Raymond?"

"This young gentleman, who so cleverly captured you, and cut short the evil career of your pal, is William Raymond, captain of a band of detectives."

"Ah! he's young to be in the ferret business."

"Not too young, as you can testify to."

"That's so."

"You will direct him just how to reach the den?"

"Yes."

"How many men have you in the band?"

"In town here about twenty-five, including the cap'n."

"Then it is possible he may, in the absence of your pal and yourself, have to confront as many as twenty-three?"

"He may, if all are in; but it's hardly likely all will be there."

"Still it is best to go prepared for the worst?"

"It is."

"Is there no other means of escape, then the one by which we enter?" asked Wizard Will.

"A well thought of question, Will," said Captain Daly.

"Yes, there is."

"As how?"

"By the fire-escapes out of the hall window."

"I see, and they go down into the back yard of the house?"

"No, they go down two flights, onto a roof of a house, and crossing that to the next house you find an old window in the side of a wall, and this opens, and you find a fire-escape onto the side leading into a narrow alley."

"You seem to have forgotten this," sternly said Captain Daly.

"Well, I thought you would likely catch the rats in the trap, and give them no chance to escape."

"Be very careful not to forget any particulars, my man."

"I'll be particular, so jot down all I say, as I goes over the information again," and the man turned again to Wizard Will who had made notes of all that had been said thus far.

Having gained full particulars Will said:

"I will telegraph my mother, sir, that I will not be home to-night, and we can make the raid before daylight."

"Yes, and you will take charge of the men, and I will have thirty good officers detailed for the duty."

"And I can go, sir?" asked Foxey eagerly.

"Yes, if Will so wishes," responded Captain Daly, who then turned to the prisoner with the remark:

"My man, you go back to your cell now, and if all turns out as you have said, you can take the steamer to-morrow afternoon for Liverpool: but if you have deceived us, you will go from here to the city prison, there to await your trial as a murderer."

"I'm no fool, cap'n, and know when to tell the truth, as you will see," was the man's answer, as he was led away to his cell once more.

CHAPTER XIII.

SWORN IN.

BEFORE Wizard Will left the police station, a telegram came from Constable Ross, calling him out to the village, and Captain Daly and Foxey accompanied him.

The latter saw at a glance, upon his arrival, that he was not recognized as Foxey, and so he wisely kept still in regard to who he really was.

The constable had become alarmed at the pressure against him, for having allowed Will and Foxey to go, and so had telegraphed; but the presence of Captain Daly, returning with the youth, quickly put matters to rights, and the coroner and his jury were content.

"We ought ter have that Vagabond Boy, to testify, cap'n," said the constable, and Foxey stood by his side as he spoke.

"He told you last night his part in the affair, and Will Raymond here acknowledges the killing, and it was done in the discharge of his duty, so what more do you want, Ross?" said the captain.

"Nothing, I guess, if you are satisfied."

"I am."

"And you are coroner?"

"Yes."

"Then all we can do is to bury the body now, and try and find his pal."

"Leave that to me, Constable Ross, and I think I can promise you some developments soon; but you must keep a bright watch here for suspicious characters, and my advice to you is to keep an eye on the cottage of the widow Raymond, for the aim of these rascals seems to be against her."

"Who is she, cap'n?" asked Constable Ross, in a low tone.

"The mother of that young man whom I officially notified you was a special officer of the police and in the Secret Service, and was to be obeyed as such."

"Mrs. Raymond is a friend of mine, and she has enemies who wish to get money out of her, so I tell you to be on the watch to see that she is not molested."

"I will, Cap'n Daly; you can depend upon me."

"Wire me at once, if anything occurs in which you need my services, and report to my boy officer when he returns home at night, if there is aught suspicious occurring."

"I'll do it, sir; but how about that Waif?"

"The one you call Foxey?"

"Yes, sir."

"He'll turn up all right, so don't worry about him."

And accompanied by Foxey, still unrecognized, and Wizard Will, Captain Daly sprung into a carriage and drove out to the cottage, stopping on the way to see the scene of the tragedy, and have the boys explain just how it had happened.

Will had dispatched a messenger to his mother to tell her they would be there to dinner, so they received a warm welcome, and Foxey was introduced as Master Fox by Captain Daly.

But the keen eyes of Pearl were fixed upon the strange youth most earnestly, and she said:

"I know you."

"Who am I, miss?" asked Foxey.

"You look different from what you did then, but still I know you."

"Why, Pearl, where have you seen the young gentleman before?" asked Mrs. Raymond, while Captain Daly and Will looked on with considerable interest.

"The day we went to New York, mamma, to make the purchases you needed, when we were coming ashore from the steamboat, and the gang-plank slipped off the dock when I was on it, and threw me into the water."

"True, Pearl, but I do not remember seeing this youth."

"Yes, mamma, though then he was dressed oh! so badly, and looked poor and wretched; but I know him, for he jumped in after me, pulled me out under the wheel of the steamboat, and swam around with me to the steps, and saved my life."

"And you are that gallant boy whom I tried so hard to find and reward?" said Mrs. Raymond, with tears in her eyes.

"I did not do more than I should, Mrs. Raymond; but I tell you, Miss Pearl, you've got hawk eyes to know me."

"She has indeed," muttered Captain Daly, and from that moment Foxey became a hero in the Raymond cottage.

After a good dinner the captain and his boy allies returned to the city, and Wizard Will set to work to perfect his plans for the night raid upon the den of the Land Sharks.

Disguised as a newsboy, while Foxey simply resumed his old tatters, and rubbed dirt on his face, the two boys went to look the field over.

They found the alleyway and the fire-escape leading to it, and Wizard Will said:

"Five officers must be placed here."

Then they went to the number which led into the cellar, and found it to be an ordinarily respectable looking house, though the neighborhood was none of the best.

"I will leave five men here, Foxey, in case there might be another exit here, which that rascal forgot to tell us, and with the rest of the officers we will go to the den, and it will be a great thing if we can bag the entire party, though I would rather capture that Elegant Ed than all of them, and find out what it is he has against me."

Having completed their reconnoissance, the two friends then set out upon their return, and Wizard Will leading the way they halted at a door over which was a sign, reading:

"LODGING HOUSE FOR POOR BOYS."

Entering the by no means very attractive domicile, Will led the way up the flight of rickety stairs, and soon came to a landing where there was a kind of an office, where an old man sat, reading a paper.

"Want supper or lodging, boys, or both?"

"I see you are strangers, so our prices are fifteen cents a meal, the same for a bed, with better accommodations for those who wish to pay, at fifty cents for meals and same for a room."

"We are fifty-centers, Toby, so give me my key," said Will.

"Lor', Cap'n Will, I didn't know you for a fact."

"Here's your key, sir."

"Any of my boys in, Toby?"

"Yes, sir, nine are in the private dormitory," answered the old man, and Will passed in, followed by Foxey.

Ascending two more flights he opened a door leading into a hall room, by inserting three pass-keys, and Foxey saw a pleasant room, with a

desk, several chairs, a lounge-bed, some books and a quantity of clothing of various kinds hanging on the wall.

There was a door opening into a larger room, but this was closed.

"Here is my office, Foxey, and as I intend to make you my sergeant, you can room here and have your meals with the boys, as I will show you."

"It was my idea to have our Boy Detectives' Head-quarters as a lodging house, for then our going in and out does not attract attention."

"The cheap prices you heard old Toby refer to, are for strange boys who may come in for lodging and meals, and on the floor where he has his roost, as we call it, is a dormitory and eating-room for them."

"The higher prices are made to protect ourselves, for a boy seldom asks for a fifty-cent lodging and meal, and should he do so, Toby tells him that all are filled."

"Up-stairs here the back hall room, opposite to this, is the kitchen, and the large room adjoining is the one we eat in, while the dormitory is next to this."

"I have just fifteen Boy Detectives with you, and we are well cared for."

"Your pay is thirty dollars a month, with your lodging and meals."

"We have a fund for getting disguises and for outside necessary expenses, which Captain Daly allows us, and we have done such good work in the way of getting rewards offered, that we have not had to call upon him for a dollar."

"Come, and I will show you our rooms, and introduce you to the boys that are in, while you must know that Toby is a policeman on special duty, and is always at his post, for he sleeps in his office, and calls on a boy to take his stand if he is called off."

So saying, Wizard Will opened the door leading into the adjoining room, and Foxey followed him, surprised and delighted at what he saw.

The house was an old fashioned structure, the rooms being exceedingly large, and the one they entered had a number of berths on one side, forming pleasant beds, while there was a large table, with pens, ink-stands, paper and copy-books upon it.

On the other side was a large black-board, book-cases, an enormous globe, complete maps of New York, New Jersey, Brooklyn, and the towns surrounding for miles.

Some law books occupied one shelf, a number of school books another, and then these held back-gammon boards, checkers, chess and other games, with materials for drawing, painting and modeling.

"We have some officers on the force who teach the boys regularly every day, and give lessons in drawing, painting and sculpturing, and then there are games to amuse us, books to read, and we get along splendidly."

"Now come in to supper, for the boys are there," and Will led the way by deep closets on each side of a narrow hallway, into the back room, which was equally as large as the other, and where a table was set out, spread with a neat cloth and dishes.

As the room was also used as a social hall, eight or nine youths were seated there, watching with interest the movements of the man who was both cook and waiter, and who was setting the supper upon the table.

They ranged from ten years old to eighteen, and were a bright looking set of fellows.

All arose as Will entered and saluted him politely, while he said pleasantly: "Good-evening, boys, and let me introduce to you a new comrade, and a particular friend of mine, and who answers to the name of Foxey."

One of the larger boys stepped forward and offered his hand to Foxey, while the others followed his example, and Wizard Will said:

"Foxey is to be my sergeant, you must remember, so obey him accordingly."

"Now we will have supper," and the meal being ready all sat down and fell to in a way that showed they were boy-like, *always hungry*.

After supper was over Foxey was "sworn in" as a member of the Boy Detectives' League, and the swearing in ceremony was a very impressive affair.

But he stood the ordeal well, and then set to work to acquaint himself with the duties of his new occupation, while Wizard Will let the boys know enough about their new sergeant to look upon him as a real hero, and one to be respected for his courage and worldly experience.

CHAPTER XIV.

FISHING FOR LAND SHARKS.

AFTER leaving the "Retreat," as the young detective called their home, Wizard Will went with Foxey to the quarters of Captain Ryan

Daly, where they found that officer arranging for his night raid upon the Land Sharks.

"Ah! Will, I am glad you have come, and suppose you have been instructing Foxey into the mysteries of detective life."

"Yes, sir, I'm a member in good standing," said Foxey, with a smile.

"Well, Will, I have picked out thirty of my best men for you, and they are subject to your orders when you need them."

"But you will go, sir?"

"Oh, no, for this is your circus, my boy, and not mine."

"Do you mean that I have to take full charge, sir?"

"Certainly."

"But, captain, I—"

"Not a word, Captain Raymond of the Boys' League, for you are hereby ordered to take charge of the affair, and carry it out as best you can. At what time will you start?"

"About two o'clock, sir."

"It is now nine, so go into the waiting-room, you and Foxey, and get what sleep you can, for I will have you called at 1:30."

The boys obeyed, and slept serenely until the sergeant called them up.

The men began to drop in then, and not one objected to being led by a boy who had proven himself so capable of doing the work of a man.

At the appointed hour they set out from the station, five men having been sent, under the guidance of Foxey, to guard the alley where the fire-escape descended.

The others made their way to the number in the street where the Land Sharks were wont to enter, and by the time they reached there Foxey had joined them, being breathless from his run, after having placed his party in position.

Then Wizard Will knocked at the door, and it was opened from within, in some way, for no one was visible.

Following his directions, Will went to the rear of the hall, where a door led into a back room.

Upon this door he gave five distinct knocks, and it flew open, as had the outer one, showing that it was opened by a spring.

No light burned in the room, but the officers quickly opened their lanterns, and a man sprung out of a bed in the corner, while a cry of alarm broke from his lips.

"Well, my man, we are here to make you a visit, and you will excuse our disturbing you, I know," said Wizard Will, and he motioned to two of the policemen, all of whom were now in the room, and the man was quickly handcuffed, while he said:

"What do you want with me?"

"You are doorkeeper for this house, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Then you are the man I want, for the present, at least."

"Now, men, we will go in search of the den."

As Will spoke he went to a corner of the room, pulled up the carpet, which was not tacked, and then one of the officers raised a trap-door, which revealed a pair of steps leading down into the cellar.

A lantern burned there, and the raiders went down, while one officer was left with the prisoner, who called out:

"If you are looking for those smugglers, you won't find 'em, for the cap'n ordered all of 'em away this afternoon."

"Come, men, we must push on," cried Will, and they crossed the cellar, opened a door in the wall which had bricks on the side to resemble the foundation of the building, and descending several steps, found themselves in a narrow tunnelway.

This they followed, Will leading, and it seemed indeed a long and dismal walk.

But at last they came to a brick wall, and in it there was an opening large enough for a man to enter without trouble. Straight into it Will went, and standing up he found he was in a space some three feet square, and in one side was a ladder fitted into the bricks.

Several officers urged to go first, but Will would not hear to this, and as there was space, he and Foxey climbed up side by side, while the policemen came close at their heels.

It was a long climb, but at last the trap was reached, and they knew that they had been ascending a chimneyway, or what was intended to represent one.

A door was now before the face of the boys, and it was gently pushed open by Will, who held a revolver in one hand, while Foxey had his lantern.

A large room was revealed, and the boys found themselves looking into it from what appeared to be a cupboard in the wall.

"It is the same room I was in once before; but it is empty," said Will, in a whisper.

So into the room they sprung, and were quickly followed by the officers.

There were four rooms on the floor, all connecting, and all comfortably furnished, and seemingly having but the one way of egress and ingress, through the chimney.

But not a soul was visible, though there was every indication that the rooms had been very recently occupied.

It was a most bitter disappointment for the raiders, and they stood looking at each other in silent chagrin.

"This is the Land Sharks' den, but they have gone; some one has warned them," said Wizard Will.

"That Elegant Ed is a sly one, and he has skipped on some account," said the officer.

"The man at the door said they had gone, and that the captain had run them all off," Will remarked.

"We've got him at any rate," replied Foxey, and seeing no other means of exit, except by the roof and fire-escape, Will left four officers in charge, and dividing his force, started to gain the street by both ways which the prisoner at the station had said it could be reached.

He again led the party back to the entrance room, and, as he stepped out of the cellar a cry escaped his lips, for the police officer left in charge of the doorkeeper lay dead on the floor, and the prisoner was not to be seen.

Springing to the side of the prostrate form, Foxey drew from the heart a long-bladed knife, the handle of which was of ivory, carved in exact representation of a shark.

"Thus ends our raid, with the loss of one of our men, and not a single prisoner," said Will, sadly, as he saw that the officer was dead, and his slayer nowhere to be found.

Leaving several men in charge, Will returned quickly to the station.

It was now nearly sunrise, and Captain Daly, who was a bachelor, had come early to his office, anxious to learn the particulars of the raid.

He saw that something of a serious nature had happened, and listened to the story of the Boy Detective in stern silence.

"Will, those Land Sharks must be caught, one and all of them, and I leave it to you to hunt them down."

"I'll do it, sir, if in my power; but what about this man Buck?"

"He did his part faithfully, and we must keep our word to him, though I hate to set such a villain free."

"Perhaps he can solve the mystery about the killing of Officer Bradley."

"He may; at any rate we can ask him," and the prisoner was sent for.

But he said that the doorkeeper was a powerful fellow, and had doubtless gotten the best of the officer left in charge of him, while the King of Cards learning of his capture, and the death of his pal Nick, had dreaded exposure and taken the men off.

"But where could he take them?" asked Captain Daly.

"I do not know, sir; but he is a fly man, I can tell you, and has some other hiding-place ready for just such a business as this, though he don't tell us nothing about his affairs."

"I am sorry you didn't get 'em, for if they suspect me, and they know I am a prisoner, they will kill me."

"Well, my man, though I'd rather see you hanged, I'll keep my word with you, so the money I promised you will be given to you by the officer who takes you on board the steamer, and I hope you'll use it honestly and live a different life, after the narrow escape you have had," and so saying Captain Daly called an officer to take the prisoner back to his cell until time for him to start for the steamer that was to sail that afternoon.

CHAPTER XV.

ELEGANT ED AT HOME.

IN an elegant suit of rooms that seemed to indicate the abode of one of refined and luxurious tastes, and a plethora pocket-book as well, a man lay half asleep, half awake in a comfortable bed.

It was early in the morning, not yet seven o'clock, and though it was his most attractive hour for sleep, somehow slumber would not come to him and drowsy thought in forgetfulness.

At last, he said, impetuously:

"I cannot sleep, so will get up."

Out of bed he sprung, and began to leisurely dress.

As he finished his toilet, by drawing on a

velvet dressing-gown, he looked to be a very handsome man of forty.

There were traces of dissipation in his face, and he wore a cynical smile, yet for all that he was an attractive-looking man, while his form was elegant and showed great strength in the broad shoulders and massive chest.

Entering an adjoining room he found himself in what was a part library, sitting-room and parlor.

He threw himself into an easy-chair and became lost in thought.

But it lasted but a moment, and then he arose and touched the button of an electric bell.

A minute after a door opened and a servant in livery entered.

"Jo-jo, bring me the morning papers, and then order my breakfast," said the occupant of the elegant rooms.

"Yis, sur, and there's a man ter see yez, sur," answered Jo-jo.

"Who is it?"

"I don't be after knowin', sur."

"You should know, you infernal man-monkey, every one who comes to see me."

"Bring me a brandy cocktail with my papers, and then find out who the visitor is at this unearthly hour of the morning."

"Yis, sur," and the livered servant disappeared, while his master arose and took another seat upon the other side of an ebony center-table.

On a shelf under the table, lay two revolvers, and these were within easy reach of the man's hand, showing that he had changed his seat for a purpose.

Rising impatiently, he walked to the window, and, drawing aside an impenetrable shade, looked out.

His home was upon a fashionable thoroughfare, for handsome mansions were visible upon all sides, and well-dressed people were promenading the streets.

After standing there a moment, he drew back the rich curtaining, and removed his hat, just as Jo-jo again entered.

"I have the papers, sir, and your brandy cocktail, sir," and he placed the former upon the table, while the latter was taken from the silver salver by his master and dashed off with evident relish.

"And the visitor?"

"I'll be afther finding out now, sir."

"Did you order my breakfast?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring me another cocktail with it, for I must get up an appetite."

"Yes, sir."

"Now find out who this early caller is," and the gentleman took up the *Herald* as he threw himself back in his easy-chair.

A moment after the Irishman reappeared.

"Well, Jo-jo?"

"He says his name is afther being Tiger, sir."

"Ah! one of my menagerie! Show him up at once, you man-monkey," and as Jo-jo departed, seemingly not caring for the insulting name, which was certainly most appropriate, his master said in a tone of some anxiety:

"What has brought that man here, I wonder?"

In vain did the man try to read the paper before him, for he appeared nervous, and could fix his mind upon nothing, and was glad when his visitor was ushered in by Jo-jo.

The caller was a man of large frame, and with a smoothly shaven face, indicative of much resolution and courage.

He was well dressed, carried a high silk hat in his hand, and might be taken for a wealthy merchant.

The occupant of the room slightly started at sight of him, and dropped his hand upon one of the weapons on the shelf under the table.

"Good-morning, captain," said the stranger in a pleasant way.

"Ah! Tiger, it is you, then? I did not know you, and as you looked like a cross between a police captain and a deacon, I was afraid you had run me to earth," and the speaker settled himself back in his easy-chair, while he motioned his visitor to a seat.

"I've shaved off my heavy beard, captain, and had my hair cut, so it changes me completely, as you see," and the man dropped into a chair, while he continued:

"There is music in the air, captain, and I'm here to tell you about it."

"Just wait one moment, Tiger, while I show you my skill in shooting," called out the man addressed as captain, speaking in a loud voice, and adding:

"I'll bet you a hundred dollars I can put a bullet through the keyhole of that door."

"Howley Moses!" cried a voice without in the hallway, and hurrying feet were heard, while the crack of a pistol resounded through the room.

"Pretty good shot that, captain," said Tiger, as he saw that the bullet had buried itself in the woodwork within a quarter of an inch of the keyhole.

"I hit where I aimed, Tiger, for I did not wish to kill him, as a dead body in the house is not very easily gotten rid of; but it will teach that man-monkey a lesson."

"Now to your story."

"Well, Captain Ed, there's been rough work at our dove-cot, for the hawks have pounced down upon us."

"I have feared it, for I did not fully trust that man Buck, or Snake, as I call him, and I properly named him, for he's proven himself worthy of it."

"You think Snake betrayed us, sir?"

"Yes, for how else did the police know how to find us?"

"That I can not tell, sir; but it is a good thing you got the boys moved, or they would have been caught, as I was."

"Tell me about it, Tiger?"

"Well, sir, I was in bed, and was feeling pretty good at not having to be waked up a dozen times to pull the spring latch and let the boys in, and not expecting any one I had put the light out, when I got a ring."

"I opened the door of course, believing it was some of the people in the house and next came the signal at my door."

"Then I thought it was you, sir, or some of the boys, and I gave the spring latch a pull, and instantly half a dozen bull's-eye lanterns flashed in my face and the room was full of police."

"I got up in a hurry, I can tell you; but it was no use to put on airs, so I subsided and an officer took charge of me, while that boy we once caught, and who turned the tables on us, went over to the corner, pulled back the carpet and raised the trap."

"I tell you, captain, that boy was thoroughly posted, and he is one of the pluckiest youngsters I ever saw."

"Yes, and his days must be cut short, for he seems to dog us like a bloodhound; but what was done then?"

"I led them to believe that I was simply door-keeper, and that I knew the men who occupied the cellar simply as smugglers, and I told the cops you had all skipped."

"But they would not believe me, and went on the trail to the den, the boy leading."

"They left me in charge of a blue-coat, and he seemed to feel that his presence was enough to keep me quiet; but I watched my chance, sprung upon him, put my shark-knife into his heart, and getting my traps together, left that quarter as quickly as I could."

"I steered for a hotel, got shaved, put on this suit of clothes and hat, and here I am to report to you."

"You killed the policeman, Tiger?"

"Of course," was the cool reply.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAND SHARKS' RETREAT.

"You got off easily, Tiger, for the police would have left nothing undone to hang you," said Elegant Ed.

"Yes, I got off well; but it would take more than two of that band to keep me a prisoner."

"I know your strength and courage, Tiger; but I suppose you now wish to join the boys where they are in hiding?"

"Yes, sir, that is why I looked you up."

"Well, as soon as I have had my breakfast, I will go with you; but have you breakfasted?"

"Yes, thank you, captain."

"Well, you will drink something?"

"No, captain, liquor caused me to commit my first crime, and though I shall go on sinning until my dying day, I have never touched a drop since, nor will I ever do so."

"I wish I could say the same, Tiger; but here comes my man-monkey, and just listen how he makes his presence known, so that I will not fire another shot."

And Elegant Ed and Tiger joined in a laugh together, as though they were not outlaws with a price upon their heads, and one of them only a few hours ago had taken human life.

Jo-jo came along the hall with a heavy tread, the rattle of dishes, and with an affected cough, to make his presence known.

A moment after he entered the room, his white face showing that he had not gotten over his fright, and he glanced furtively at his master and his visitor as he set the tray of dishes on a side table.

"Did I frighten you, Jo-jo?" innocently asked Elegant Ed.

"Howly Moses, but you did, sur, for I was afther stooping to pick up a pin, which is good luck, sur, and bang went the goon, and—"

"I bet my friend here that I could put a bullet through that keyhole, and just see where I hit."

"It was a good shot, but I intend to do it yet, and you must let me know when you are near the door, so that I won't kill you, by accident."

"I'll do it, sur, faith but I will, ivery toime," and Jo-jo's hand trembled as he poured out a cup of coffee for his master.

After leisurely eating his breakfast, Elegant Ed put on his street coat, and the two left the rooms together.

It was a flat apartment, over a corner drug store, that he occupied, and the two floors above him appeared to have no occupants.

"You have pleasant quarters, captain," said Tiger, as they reached the street.

"Oh, yes; I must live like a gentleman, if I die like a felon," was the reckless response.

"And your upper neighbors, they do not suspect you?"

"I have no neighbors above me, as I rent the three floors to avoid company I do not fancy."

"I see," and after a minute Tiger continued:

"You can trust your servant?"

"My man-monkey you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, yes, for I saved his life once, hold a secret against him that keeps him in check, and his wife is my cook and I pay her well, while they know me only as a gentleman of means; so you see they have nothing to tell; but Jo-jo is curious and seeks information in a sly way, as you discerned awhile since, though I think I have cured him of that plan."

"I judge so, for he was terribly frightened; but are you going to indulge in a button-hole bouquet?" and Tiger asked the question as Elegant Ed turned into a florist's shop.

"Wait and see," was the response, and Elegant Ed looked over several handsome bouquets and said to the florist, whose shop was filled with other customers:

"I will take that one; but can I write a letter here?"

"Certainly, sir, just walk into the back room and you will find materials there."

Elegant Ed went on as directed, motioning to Tiger to follow, and passing through the office he turned into a hot-house, walking down the entire length, when he opened the doors of what appeared to be a flower vault, while Tiger looked on with surprise.

"Come," said Elegant Ed, simply, and he went down into the vault, closing the door behind his comrade.

There was a dim light there, from a lantern burning some distance ahead of them, and going toward it through what was a tunnel, formed from a deep ditch roofed over, they came to another door at the end.

With the same key which he had used to open the other door, Elegant Ed opened this one, and the two found themselves in a cellar.

A pair of steep steps led up to the floor, and ascending until his hands touched the planks, Elegant Ed rapped three times distinctly.

Almost instantly a footfall was heard above, and up went a trap-door, a woman having raised it.

She had a cold, stern face, was neither young or pretty, and yet bowed respectfully to Elegant Ed, while he said:

"Well, Pigeon, how are you?"

"I am always well, captain, I thank you," was the response, and she shot a quick look at the companion of the captain, which the latter saw and said:

"This is another of my Human Menagerie, Pigeon, and is known by the gentle name of Tiger, so you need have no fear of him."

"And, Tiger, I would remark to you, that this lady is one of the birds of my menagerie, and is the guard and housekeeper of this establishment."

"Now, let us go up and see the boys."

Elegant Ed led the way out of the room, which was the kitchen of a what Tiger judged was a small residence, fronting on the street running parallel with that upon which the shop of the florist stood.

Tiger also noticed that the windows were tightly closed, and that the light was from lamps.

Ascending the stairs, which like all the floors were heavily padded and carpeted, they came to the third floor, where the light and air came in from skylights above.

Opening a door on the right, Elegant Ed said in his sarcastic way:

"Walk in, Tiger, and see the other animals." The rooms were almost a duplicate of those which the police had raided, led by Wizard Will.

In the rooms were a score of men, and they all arose at the entrance of their captain and comrade, saluting the former most politely, as though they regarded him as a being far superior to themselves.

The men seemed surprised to see Tiger, the doorkeeper of their old quarters, and intuitively imagined that something was wrong, when they saw that he had cut off his hair and long beard.

"Men, the lair of the Tiger has been invaded, and I removed you here just in time to save your necks, for the police have our den, and our comrade here only saved his life by taking that of one who sought his, so I have brought him here," and with this explanation Elegant Ed passed on into a small room which was his private room, when he was with his band.

Tiger looked about him with considerable interest, and was told that the house they were in was supposed to be unoccupied, and belonged to their captain, whom the band idolized, and at the same time stood in as great awe of him as they did of the gallows.

After an hour alone in his office Elegant Ed reappeared with a number of slips of paper in his hand.

Handing one slip to a short stout man with red hair, he said:

"Wolf, you will find your instructions here, so disguise yourself and see if you cannot find out a way to get that boy enemy of ours into your power."

"He lives at the village named herein, and I wish you to find out all particulars regarding him, and his people."

"He it was who deceived us all, as you know, and he it was who shot Night Hawk Jerry, on his trip into Maryland, and he has just killed Nick the Leopard, and captured Buck the Snake."

"At this rate he'll thin out my menagerie, and so I wish you to get all the points you can about him, and let me know."

"I'll do my best, cap'n," said the man addressed as Wolf, in a deep, sepulchral voice, and he turned away and entered another room, while Elegant Ed distributed the remaining papers to others of the band, giving them certain instructions to carry out, and in each case calling them by the name of some animal, which was an odd freak of his which his obedient men submitted to.

As Elegant Ed was departing a man came out of the next room, and no one would have recognized in the saint-like looking sinner, in black suit, white tie, high hat encircled by crape, black sachel, spectacles and gloves, the man whom his captain had called Wolf.

"How do you like me, captain?" asked Wolf, in his deep, melancholy voice.

"You are great, Wolf, and in that rig of a sheep's clothing Satan wouldn't know you."

"Are you going out?"

"Yea, verily, Brother Edward, I goeth forth into the country to sell my books for the benefit of the wretched heathen," said Wolf in his dismal way, mimicking a style which many ministers affect, as though it added to their piety.

Elegant Ed and the others laughed at Wolf's good acting, and the two left the rooms together, and departed by the same way in which the outlaw leader had led Tiger.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

THE result of the raid upon the outlaw band of Land Sharks, created a great sensation in official circles, for it was known to the entire force, police and detectives, that this particular gang of evil-doers were the worst in the country, and were guilty of more crimes than were half the villains in the metropolis.

Knowing how desirous any one of the police chiefs, and the men for that matter, were of capturing the Land Sharks, and especially Elegant Ed, Wizard Will made up his mind that he would track them down, if it could be done.

So he took Foxey into his confidence, and they set to work, puzzling their brains to solve the mystery of how to catch the outlaws.

Having entered upon his duties as a boy detective, Foxey at once, as he expressed it, "shucked himself," and got back into his old toggery, for what he said was his vagabond suit could hardly be called clothes.

A little dirt on his face, and an assumed look of injured innocence made Foxey the vagabond walf again.

"I kin do more good in a minute in this rig, Captain Billy, than I could in broadcloth in a month, in secret sarvice work," Foxey had said.

But neither he nor Wizard Will could settle upon any direct plan to start out on the capture of the Land Sharks, and so the matter was discussed in the League rooms, when all of the Boy Detectives were present, and their young captain made known that Captain Daly had informed him that there was an offer of five thousand dollars for Elegant Ed's capture, and one thousand for any one of his band, dead or alive.

"Now, boys," continued Will, "I shot one of the band, as you know, and so the captain paid me the reward for him, as also the reward of another thousand for Buck, the man we let go."

"I have no desire to take blood-money for a man I killed, so I put that thousand dollars into the common fund to be divided among you all, excepting Foxey, who will share with me the reward for the man Buck, for he aided me in capturing him."

"Now, as you see the rewards will be promptly paid, I wish you all to start out on the track of the Land Sharks, and in some way we must run them down."

The Boy Detectives were delighted with the generosity of their young captain, and one and all made up their minds that they would hunt Elegant Ed and his men to the bitter end.

Having gotten his comrades enthusiastic upon the subject of the Land Sharks, Wizard Will made a complete tour of the city himself, in an effort to try and make some discovery that would be of benefit to him.

As he was walking quietly along in the upper part of town, he saw a gentleman come out of a florist's, and immediately behind him followed a stout individual, who looked as though he might be a country parson.

The gentleman struck him as being one he had seen before, though he could not see his face; but his bearing was familiar, it seemed, and the Boy Detective determined to cross the street and get a closer look.

As he did so he saw him half-turn, call the clerical-looking personage to him, and after a few words, hand him a slip of paper.

Wizard Will was yet some little distance away, when the gentleman hailed a passing cab, and springing into it was driven rapidly off.

"Pardon me, sir; but will you tell me the name of that gentleman who just addressed you?" he asked, overtaking the clerical-looking person.

"Good-morning, my son; did you speak to me?" asked the man in a deep voice.

"I asked, sir, if you would kindly tell me the name of the gentleman who drove off in that hack?"

"A good man, a Christian gentleman, my son, who has just given me an order to carry to his home several volumes of pious works that I have the sole agency for, and the proceeds of the sale of which will go to the heathen in India."

"Let me show them to you, my son, for I have them here in my sachel."

Wizard Will was disgusted with the canting manner of the clerical book-agent, and said sharply:

"No, sir, I do not care to see the books, but I would like you to answer my question."

"What was that you asked, my son?"

"The name of the gentleman who just left you?"

"Ah! that gentleman is General Edgar King, my son, a man of fame as a soldier, as you will know if you are up in the history of our great, glorious and pious country."

"What is his address, please?"

"Are you a brother book-agent?"

"I am not, sir."

"Then I will tell you that he lives on No. — West Thirty-ninth street."

"I thank you, sir; good-morning, sir," and Wizard Will turned away, while the book-agent said, as he gazed after him:

"I wonder who the boy is, for he evidently was anxious to find out about the captain."

"I wish I'd asked his name."

Then the pretended book-agent, whom the reader has doubtless recognized as Wolf the Land Shark, walked on his way.

After going a square Will turned back and entered the shop of the florist.

A heavy-built man, with a stolid air was arranging some flowers, while two young girls were the only other occupants of the shop, as Will walked in.

"Pardon me, sir, but two gentlemen just left your shop, and could you tell me the name of the taller one?"

"Why do you wish to know, for I do not care to give the name of my customers to strangers?" was the gruff reply.

Will's face flushed, but he replied:

"I thought that I knew the gentleman, and if so, his name would recall where I had before met him, for I cannot remember."

"His name is Doctor Edgar."

"I thank you, sir, I thought that it was General Edgar King?"

"No."

"You know General King, sir?"

"Never heard of him."

"You know to which gentleman I refer?"

"There was but one, the other was an infernal book-agent."

Wizard Will bowed politely and departed.

He was in a quandary, for here was a case of flat contradiction, for the gentleman had been given two directly different names, and by two persons who, the boy supposed, should know.

He was naturally more inclined to take the statement of the florist, for he should certainly know; but neither name did Will remember to have ever heard before, and yet he was sure that he had seen the gentleman somewhere.

So he went into a drug store near and looked up the name of Edgar, M. D., in a Directory.

He could not find it.

"There is something strange in this," he muttered as he walked along the street, after leaving the drug-store.

"Why did that parson and the florist deceive me, I wonder?"

"And where have I ever seen that form before— Hal! I have it!"

"It is the King of Cards! I recall his form now perfectly," and calling a hack that was passing, Will drove hastily down-town, the driver drawing up in front of the "Boys' Lodging House."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOXLEY MAKES A DISCOVERY.

WHEN Wizard Will entered the social hall of the Boy Detectives, he found it very nearly deserted, for nearly all were out on the hunt for some clew to the haunt of the Land Sharks.

Leaving word that they should wait in, as they returned, until he came back, Will went over to the station to see Captain Daly.

"Anything new, Will?" asked the captain, as the youth entered his private office.

"Yes, sir, I have made a discovery of some importance."

"Out with it, my boy."

"I think you believe, with me, sir, that the one who gave me the letter to carry to the Land Sharks' den, that I might be entrapped, was none other than their captain, Elegant Ed?"

"Yes, such is my belief, Will."

"Well, sir, the man I saw, and whom Pearl frightened off with her pistol that night at home, was the same one who gave me the letter."

"So you said."

"I have now seen him for the third time, Captain Daly."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"Two hours ago."

"Where?"

"On — street, near the shop of a florist."

"You are sure it was he?"

"I am sure, sir."

"Did he appear to recognize you?"

"He did not see me, sir, and yet he might have done so, for when I crossed the street to get near him, he suddenly called a passing cab, and springing into it, was driven rapidly away."

"This looks as though he might have seen you."

"Yes, sir; but the strangest part of all is that he was talking to a man who looked like a country parson, and who proved to be a book-agent."

"I saw this man, Elegant Ed, hand him a paper and converse with him for a minute, and when I asked the book-agent who he was, I thought he seemed to wish to avoid telling me, and at last gave me the name of General Edgar King, who, he said, was a famous soldier."

"There was no such officer of fame, Will, either in the Union or Confederate armies."

"So I discovered, sir."

"Then I went into the florist's, from whence the two had come, and the man there tried to bluff me off, I thought, and then said it was Doctor Edgar."

"Doctor Edgar?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will soon know by looking in the Directory."

"The name is not there, sir, for I looked; but you will notice that both the book-agent and the florist used the name of Edgar."

"Egad! but that is so, and you are a shrewd fellow, Will, to have observed it."

"I noticed it, sir, and then I recalled the place where I had seen the man, for though I got no look at his face, he has a bearing not to be mistaken, and when I heard the name of Edgar, and thought of Elegant Ed, I connected very quickly the one with the other, and drove at once to my quarters to put my boys on the scent to see what they could find out for me."

"I think you are on the right track, Will."

"So it seems to me, sir."

"Describe your man as you saw him to-day."

"A tall, elegantly-formed man, with square shoulders, erect carriage, a firm step, yet very graceful in his movements, and dressed in the height of fashion."

"I think he had a mustache, carried a gold-headed cane, and wore a silk hat."

"I'll send your description to the force and the detective agencies, with orders to shadow such a man."

And writing the description out, Captain Daly rung for a clerk to have it copied and sent to each one of the precincts and Detectives' Headquarters.

"Now, Captain Daly, does it not seem to you, taking all things into consideration, that the book-agent and the florist know who that man is, and tried to put me off the track, as it were?"

"It does look so, Will, and you might shadow the florist, with a couple of your boys, and at the same time have all of your League keep a watch for the parson, book-agent or whatever he happens to be."

"I'll do it, sir, and I have left word for the boys to wait in until I returned, for I wished to see you and get your views on the matter."

"Go ahead as you are, Will, and my word for it you'll strike bed rock yet with these rascals," and Wizard Will soon after left the station and returned to his own quarters.

To his delight he met Foxey at the door, just going in.

"Got news, Cap'n Billy," said Foxey, who called Wizard Will captain since he had become a member of the League.

"Well, Foxey, we will go up-stairs and you can tell me what it is," and the two entered the rooms together, where all of the League were already gathered.

None of the boys, however, had made any important discoveries, and had come home tired out from tramping around, so Wizard Will turned to Foxey, and said:

"Now, sergeant, we will hear what you have to say."

"I hain't done nothin', Cap'n Billy, but I has heard lots."

"Well, give us the benefit of it."

"Well, I were loafin' round the docks, an' I set eye on two men walkin' back an' forward on a pier; as though they was waitin' for somebody, so I seen 'em go as far as a pile o' boxes and then turn back."

"So I slipped round to ther boxes and found some bundles o' baggin' there, and I lay down for a snooze."

"Putty soon ther men come back and stopped near me, and almost immediately I heerd one say:

"Thar he comes now."

"So it is, and we will know just what's to be did, said t'other."

"A moment arter, up came a third man, as I knowed by ther salutations, and then I heerd what it is I'm goin' ter tell yer."

"Ther fact is, Cap'n Billy and pards, they was a gang o' burglars, or river pirates, and they was plottin' to run down on the Jersey coast and rob ther country house of a rich gentleman, an old soldier by the name of Colonel Ivey, as near as I could get it."

"Colonel Dick Ivey!" and Wizard Will sprung to his feet in angry surprise.

"Yes, Cap'n Billy, that was the name, and they said as how he had plenty of silver plate in the house, and valuable brick-bats—"

"Bric-a-brac you mean, Foxey."

"You know best, Cap'n Billy, but I thought they said brick-bats, and I knows they said silver, and paintings, and books that was most valuable."

"When were they going to commit the robbery, Foxey?"

"They said on next Sunday night."

"Did they say more?"

"Yes, one of 'em, the last one who came, was the man who had been looking up a vessel and he had chartered a yacht to go in."

"A yacht?"

"Yes, they said they would run down Sunday mornin' to the Horseshoe and anchor until night,

and then sail down the coast to the inlet on which the home of the colonel was located."

"If the wind was not blowing fresh on Sunday night, they'd wait until Monday night, and so on until they got a good breeze."

"Did they say how many of them there were?"

"Only the four, for one said when t'others wanted to get two more pals to jine 'em, the short dervision were better than long dervision, as each man got more booty."

"So much the better for us, Foxey; but what more was said?"

"Nothing more than that they'd sail for Boston with their booty, and sell it there to a man who would give them a good price for it."

"They'll never sell it, Foxey, for we will be on hand."

"Let me see, this is Friday, and we have two nights in which to prepare."

"Foxey!"

"Yes."

"You are a good sailor."

"I'm pretty good at it, Cap'n Billy."

"Well, you must charter a good yacht, one that can go, mind you, and have her ready to leave Saturday morning, so get what provisions on board we may need for a ten days' cruise."

"I'll do it; but for how many, Cap'n Billy?"

"I'll see; how many of you are sailors?" and Wizard Will glanced over his comrades.

"I am!"

"And I!"

"And me!"

"Me too!"

"I kin sail a boat!"

"I was cabin boy in a Galveston bark."

"Well, I am glad to find I have so many sailors in my band," said Wizard Will with a smile, for he saw that all wished to go on the cruise with him.

Then he added:

"I need but five besides myself and Foxey, and I will select those I deem best for the work in hand."

The selection was quickly made, Will picking out his largest and best boys, and then setting for the others that remained behind, the task of finding the book-agent, or Elegant Ed, and shadowing the florist's shop.

Having left in Foxey's hands the arrangements for the yacht cruise, Wizard Will started for home, knowing that his mother would be anxious about him, as she knew that the raid was to be made upon the den of the Land Sharks.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLEVERLY SNARED.

It was earlier than was his wont when Wizard Will started for home, so he did not find either his mother or Pearl looking out from the piazza, for his coming over the hill-top.

But the moment he reached the little gate, Pearl spied him and rushed out with a glad welcome.

His mother met him at the piazza steps, and the three sat down for a talk together, and Will told the story of the raid upon the lair of the Land Sharks.

"Oh, Will, my boy, what tragic scenes this Secret Service life brings you in contact with," said Mrs. Raymond earnestly, when her son had told her of the death of the policeman at the hands of the outlaw he had been left to guard, and he added:

"I took the knife, mother, with its shark handle, and here it is," and he showed the unique weapon to his mother and sister, both of whom seemed to be awed by looking at a blade that had so lately pierced a human heart.

"Now, mother, I must tell you that I have got to leave you for a few days, for I will have to leave on Saturday morning for a run down the Jersey coast."

"Oh, Will!" gasped the mother.

"I must do my duty, mother, and this is a case where I can render good service to Colonel Ivey."

Mrs. Raymond started, and she asked quickly:

"Have you seen him?"

"I do now and then see him, mother, but I quickly avoid him, as you begged me to do; but there is a plot to rob his home, the Soldiers' Retreat, and I can prevent it."

"Do so by all means, for it will repay in part his kindness to me, to you and to Pearl."

"Mother!"

"Yes, Will."

"Will you not tell me why you left Colonel Ivey as you did?"

"My boy, I cannot, for it is a secret that rests between Colonel Ivey and myself."

"But it was my duty to leave him, and I did

it, and I beg you never let him see you, or find me, if in your power to help it."

"I will do as you wish, mother, in all things."

"But you will see him if you go to his place?"

"No, mother, for he is away in Saratoga, and has not been at Soldier's Retreat this season, I hear."

"Very well, go and protect his home from robbery, for as you know, he has a small fortune in the mansion."

"I know it, mother, and I am anxious to save him from loss."

"What is it, sis?" and Will turned to his sister who had made some remark.

"There is a man coming down the hill and he looks like a dominie," said Pearl.

One glance at him, and Will cried:

"My parson, as I live!"

"You know him, Will?"

"Yes, mother, and no; but I'll wager he is coming here, so I'll not let him see me, but I'll be near."

"Do you think he is coming here, my son?" asked Mrs. Raymond, as Will slipped quickly into the house.

"I know it," came back the answer, and then followed:

"Bring him out all you can, mother, for I wish to hear all he has to say."

Mrs. Raymond saw that Will had some good motive for her request, and she kept her seat, while Pearl took the chair which her mother had just vacated.

Down the hill came the man, and his eyes were evidently fixed upon the cottage.

He carried his sachel swung on a stick over his shoulder, and assumed the air of one who was footsore and weary.

He half hesitated at the gate and then entered, bowing politely as he advanced toward the piazza, and saying in his sepulchral tones:

"Good-afternoon, dear lady; good-day to you, sweet child."

"May I rest my weary limbs awhile in the shelter of this charming home?"

"Take a seat, sir, and my daughter will bring you a glass of water," and Mrs. Raymond felt that she could discover in the man a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"How kind, how very kind," and the pretended parson took the most comfortable chair, and when Pearl returned with a pitcher of water and glass, he drank but little and said:

"So good of you, dear; and you have a good mother; but do you live here all alone, madam?"

"No, sir, my son lives with us."

"I did not catch your name, madam?"

"I said my son lived with us, sir."

"Ah yes; my name is a strange one for the garb I wear, which is that of a clergyman, for it is Wolf—now no play upon the name, please, for I bear that so often from my congregation, for I have a beloved flock which I teach the word for ten months in the year, while for the other two I travel around to sell books, that I may devote the proceeds to the heathen in foreign lands."

"You will subscribe to my books, Mrs.—Mrs."

"—I really forget your name again."

"My name is Raymond, sir."

"Ah, yes; you will subscribe to my 'Lives of Saints,' 'The Prophets at the Fountains,' and my 'Children in the Holy Land; you remember the money goes to the poor heathen.'"

"I find so many poor and heathen at home, sir, that I never give money to go to foreign lands, when there is so much suffering and ignorance here," said Mrs. Raymond, warmly.

"You are right, madam, to help the poor at home; but just to think of the naked and ignorant heathen."

"Let the rich, who have money to throw away, aid them then, sir, for I am poor, and I give only to those who are poorer than we are."

"You know best, madam; but is your little boy younger than your little girl?"

"No, sir; he is older."

"And he is at work, I suppose?"

"He has business in the city, sir."

"Good boy."

"Doubtless a messenger, or something of that kind?"

"No, sir; I am a detective, and you are my prisoner," and Wizard Will stepped out of the door, a revolver in his hand, and the muzzle of it covered the head of the pretended book-agent.

Mrs. Raymond and Pearl both uttered a startled cry, while they were shocked by an oath that broke from the lips of the supposed preacher.

But he was fairly caught; and he sat in his chair not daring to move, as he saw that the hand that held the revolver was as firm as a rock.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE.

THE sudden appearance of Wizard Will upon the piazza, his threatening attitude and startling words took the pretended book-agent completely aback.

His sachel was at one side of him, on the floor, and he was lolling back most comfortably in the easy-chair, and completely at the mercy of the youth.

He carried a pistol, it is true, but it was in the hip-pocket of his pantaloons, and before he could raise up even, to get his hand upon it, the Boy Detective could kill him, he saw at a glance.

Mrs. Raymond and Pearl were also startled at the unexpected act of Will, for they could not understand it; but they at once knew that he had some good motive in what he did, and they were content to abide the result.

The outlaw saw before him the very boy who had addressed him on the avenue in the city, and the one he was in search of.

What could it mean that he had come to his home ahead of him, and, seeming to divine his object, or know him, had begun by saying that he was a prisoner?

All these thoughts were in the brains of the actors in the scene, in an instant, and then a most painful silence followed, though it lasted only a second.

"Do you surrender, sir, or shall I kill you?" demanded Wizard Will, in a voice that was very decided.

"My dear boy, you are mistaken in me, and if you will let me talk to you a minute—"

"I'll let you use your tongue to argue when you cannot use your hands.

"Here, sis, feel in my pocket and get a pair of steel bracelets—there, those are the ones.

"Now, slip them on the wrists of this gentleman."

"I'll do it," said Pearl, and she did it quickly and well, although the man looked as though he meant to spring upon her.

"Now, sis, get me a rope and then I'll give this man a chance to talk."

"You shall suffer for this, boy, for I'll prosecute you.

"You have gone too far to put irons on a clergyman," said the prisoner.

"I do not believe you are a minister, and in fact I know it.

"Do you remember having seen me before?"

"Your face is familiar, and—"

"It is but a few hours since we met, sir, and you know it.

"You came out of a florist's on — street, in New York, along with a gentleman.

"You parted, and he turned back and gave you a slip of paper.

"Then he sprung into a hack and drove away, and you pretended to misunderstand me when I asked you who he was."

"Ah, yes, I know you now, and you make me a prisoner because I at first misunderstood your question?"

"You have a revengeful nature, my son, but may Heaven forgive you as I do."

"You are a canting old hypocrite, and you told me a lie about that man, for there is no such general as Edgar King, while, when I went into the florist's, he told me that it was a Doctor Edgar, and you both referred to the same person, and pretended to know him."

"I must have been mistaken, my son, for even men of my cloth are given to making mistakes at times."

"One about your size made a mistake in coming here," was the significant reply.

"I know it, I feel it, for I am not appreciated," was the doleful reply of the man.

"You'll feel it more than you do now, when you get a rope about your neck."

"Mercy! what do you mean?" and the man turned very white.

"Tell me why you came here?"

"To sell the 'Children in the Holy Land,' and—"

"Well, you sold yourself, as you see; but I want a better answer, so why did you come here to my house?"

"I am but a poor worm—"

"You'll be food for worms soon, if you don't tell me."

"I'm but a poor worm, trying to earn my daily bread, and visiting the village, I learned of this good lady, your mother, and came to sell to her my books."

"I do not believe you have been anywhere else, and you evidently came right here, after you learned the address."

"Man, you meant mischief, but I have headed you off, and you go straight to prison."

"And for what?"

"I believe you to be—"

"What?"

Wizard Will was watching the face of his prisoner all the time and studying every expression.

Now he said quickly:

"You say that was General Edgar King I saw you with?"

"Yes, it was."

"I say it was *Elegant Ed the King of Cards!*" shouted Wizard Will.

The man started, a cry escaped his lips, and he became pale as death, while he stammered forth:

"No! no! it—was—not the Land Sharks' chief."

"Ha! who said he was?"

"You did."

"I said he was *Elegant Ed, the King of Cards* and you attach the name to that of the outlaw band of Land Sharks, when only the police know this secret, outside of that gang of rascals."

"I tell you, man, you are a Land Shark yourself, and there is a price on your head, and a rope awaiting you."

"You made a mistake in coming here, for here is where your chief nearly lost his life at the hands of that girl, and had to fly like a cur."

"Here is where your pal Nick was shot dead, when he attacked me, and where his confederate in crime, Buck, was captured and taken to prison."

"Will he be hanged?" groaned the outlaw.

"You may be certain that you will, for your own words have condemned you."

"Now I will see that you are made secure against escape."

So saying, Will tied the feet of the prisoner so that he could walk only at a slow pace, and then bound his handcuffed hands to his waist, after which he hitched the old horse to the buggy and drove into the village with his man.

It was dark when he reached the jail, but the constable, who was also jailer, was there, and Will delivered up his prisoner to him with the remark:

"I will come for him in the morning for the early train, Constable Ross, so please be ready to go with me into the city."

"All right, my boy, I'll be ready for you when you come, and will take good care of the prisoner," was the reply, and Wizard Will drove back to his home.

Hardly was he out of sight when the constable who had led his prisoner to a cell, said:

"You're a pious looking gentleman to be in irons."

"I am as innocent as a child, and I will make that boy suffer for this."

"What have you done?"

"I am a clergyman, as you see by my dress and appearance, and I take two months of each year to sell good books, devoting the proceeds to the poor heathen of far, foreign lands."

"My books are in my sachel, and as you are a good man, as I can see by your face, I will make you a present of my books."

"I have but five left, and you will take much comfort in reading them."

"You are very good, sir, and I will keep them to remember you by; why, what elegant books they are," and the delighted constable spread the five books, purchased as a decoy, before him.

"It pains me to be in irons as I am, and that boy will have to suffer, for my parishioners will prosecute him for this."

"He's a pretty fresh sort of a boy, and he gets more credit as an officer than I do, but I guess you can nip his feathers, if he has arrested you for nothing."

"For nothing, I assure you, colonel," and the title bestowed upon the jailer made him prick up his ears with delight.

"Of what does he accuse, you, sir?"

"Why, he says, colonel, that I'm a burglar in disguise, peddling books to try and get a knowledge of houses to rob them."

"Why, look at my papers here, and see for yourself who and what I am."

"Here is one from the President of the United States—see, the paper has on it, as you can read for yourself,

"EXECUTIVE MANSION."

and he says, says the President,

"I know the Reverend Wolf well, and have sat under his exquisite preaching hours at a time, and for the sake of the heathen, I urge my constituents one and all, independent of party, to try his books as I have done, and to encourage the good work. I have placed my autograph in each volume, that he may raffle those copies off at a church fair for a large sum."

"Now, colonel, do you see that?"

"I do, I do! What a mistake that boy has made," groaned the constable, deeply impressed with the greatness of a man who had a personal letter from the President.

"And here is a letter from General Sherman, and another from General Ben Butler, advocating that others than they should read these saintly books, so you see I am not what that boy says I am, colonel."

"I cannot believe it."

"But, colonel, as I am arrested, it will hurt me when it's known, for you know the world is full of scandal-mongers, and I would not for three hundred dollars have it get out against me."

"It would be bad."

"Indeed it would, and if I could only get some of my distinguished friends to come out here and clear me of all suspicion."

"Could you not telegraph them?"

"Telegrams frighten people so, and some of my most influential friends have the heart-disease, and a dispatch might kill them, colonel."

"That's so, parson."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, colonel?"

"Well, parson?"

"The charge against me is a bailable offense, and I'd be bailed out for a couple of hundred dollars."

"I guess so."

"Now, colonel, I've got my recommendation papers, which are worth thousands to me, and something like three hundred and twenty dollars, and I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Well, parson?"

"I'll leave all in your hands, excepting five dollars to take me to New York; I'll get my friends and come out on the midnight train, and then you can send for that boy and have me released, and I'll promise not to prosecute him."

"Will you do it?"

"I don't see why I can't."

"You can go with me if you wish?"

"No, I've got to stay here, but you can go, I guess."

"Thank you, colonel, and I'll have you sent a fine collection for your library, for you are a well-read man I can see."

"Now let us see how we can get these irons off."

Constable Ross looked up some keys, unlocked the irons, and in half an hour after Wolf the outlaw was chuckling over his escape as he was in a railroad car being whirled rapidly back to New York City.

"I guess I'll give the captain a surprise party," he muttered, as he sprung into a hack at the ferry, and ordered the driver to put him down at a certain corner in a fashionable part of the city.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FORCED RESIGNATION.

CONSTABLE ROSS was very uneasy, when the midnight train came, and the supposed parson and his friends came not with it.

He knew there was no chance of his getting back before Wizard Will arrived in the early morning, and slowly it dawned upon his thick skull that he had been imposed on.

The more he thought it over, the more he knew that he was a fool; but he said:

"As I let him go on the belief that he was an honest man, I need not say anything about the three hundred and odd dollars."

"I have his letters to show I meant well, believing him to be what he represented himself."

So the constable awaited the coming of Will, whom he did not like, for he was one of those ignorant, envious men who could never see good in others who were his superior.

At last Wizard Will arrived, and the constable met him at the gate of the jail.

"Get your prisoner, please, Mr. Ross, and we'll go at once, for there is no time to lose."

"My boy, you made a mistake about that gentleman."

"How do you mean?"

"He is really a minister, and here are his letters to prove it, from the president, from Ben Butler, and other great men."

"I have no time to read them, and he can show them at his trial; but he is, I tell you, a pal of those other two men, and a Land Shark."

"Great Heavens!"

"I know it, so fetch him along."

"But he is not here."

"Not here?"

"He is gone."

"Escaped?"

"Well, no; not that; but he showed me his letters, and told me all about himself, and that his

congregation were going to sue you for damaging their parson, and he said if I'd keep his things, and let him go after friends, he'd not sue you, and so I let him go for your sake, and he was to have been back on the midnight train; but he didn't come."

"Constable Ross, you have been gulled, and you will find that this village does not wish a thick-skulled idiot to hold two such important positions as you have."

"You go with me to Captain Daly, sir, and let him hear your story."

"But I cannot leave, and—"

"You will either go willingly, or I will use the authority I hold and arrest you."

"I'll go with you, Will, my boy, but I wish to explain—"

"I can hear no explanations, sir, so get your hat and the things that thief left as security and come."

The constable hastily obeyed, and when Captain Daly entered his office, he was told the whole story.

"Constable Ross, I am very sorry to see that you are an idiot, for you have so proven yourself, and I have but one request to make."

"Yes, captain."

"My young friend here, you and I are all that know you let that Land Shark go, so if you do as I demand it can stop where it is, for I do not care to have it get abroad that our profession can be disgraced by having such as you in authority."

"You will therefore at once resign your offices of constable and jailer, and retire to other duties that do not require brains to run them."

"If you refuse, I shall prefer charges against you and have you dismissed in disgrace and stamped publicly as the great dunce you are."

"What will you do, Mr. Ross?"

"I'll resign, sir."

"When?"

"At the end of the month, sir, for I don't wish to lose my salary."

"You will resign within the hour after you return, sir, or—"

"I'll do it, sir; but I am a poor man, sir, and have not a dollar—"

"Here is your money, sir; I found it on your seat in the car, and intended giving it to you when I heard what Captain Daly thought of your action," and Wizard Will handed the man the roll of bills which the outlaw had given him.

The guilty man flushed crimson, and dropped his head, while Captain Daly said sternly:

"I half believe you are not such a fool as I took you for, and that you were bribed by the Land Shark."

"Be off, sir, before I have—"

But the guilty man had gone, and when Wizard Will went home that night he found the town excited over the strange act of Constable Ross in resigning his important positions.

Being now convinced that the florist also knew something about the Land Sharks, Wizard Will put his best boys to shadow the place, while he made all arrangements necessary to go upon the cruise to foil the Coast Burglars in their attack upon Soldiers' Retreat.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TWO YACHTS.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the harbor of New York was dotted with sailing vessels, among them being a number of graceful yachts, both schooners and sloops.

All seemed to be heading toward the lower bay, as though for a cruise in deep water, or a sail where there was more sea-room.

One of the little yachts astern was a sloop of some twenty tons measurement.

Her build was one to catch the eye of a sailor for its beauty, and her tall stick, long boom and gaff, and a bowsprit, that seemed to be about the same length of her mast, indicated a vast spread of canvas, though she was then sailing under a single reef mainsail and jib.

At her helm was a youth, and her crew of half a dozen seemed to be mere boys; but the yacht was most skillfully handled as she came down the East river, dodging the ferry-boats, avoiding tugs, steering clear of large tows and gliding to leeward of windward, as was necessary, of large steamships and sailing vessels.

"Foxey," called out Wizard Will, who held the tiller of the yacht.

"Yes, Cap'n Billy."

"I think you've gotten as fast a craft as is to be found, for we are creeping up with what little sail we have set."

"I know she's fast, Cap'n Billy; but do you see that gray yacht yonder, creeping to the port?"

"Yes."

"She's the Curfew."

"The yacht we have to watch?"

"Yes."

"She's going to lead the fleet from the way she goes along."

"She's got up most of her drawin' canvas."

"Well, Foxey, suppose we shake out our reef, run up the flying-jib, and set a topsail."

"I'm only too glad, cap'n," and Foxey, who was acting as mate, called his six boy sailors about him and the extra sails were quickly spread.

A seven-knot breeze was blowing, and the graceful yacht careened prettily, and at once began to show her mettle.

One by one the yachts were caught and dropped astern, until the Curfew alone held her own.

"She's got up a balloon-jib and staysail more'n we," said Foxey in an entreating tone.

"Up with ours then, Foxey."

The boys all cheered the order, and most gracefully did the yacht careen, while her speed was considerably increased.

"We're huntin' her," cried Foxey in glee.

"We'll soon let her crew read the name on our quarter," Wizard Will said, and other yachts near cheered the boy crew for the skillful manner in which they handled their craft.

There were three men only visible upon the gray yacht, and they were without doubt interested in the race, and were doing all in their power to maintain the lead they held, for they had run from the rear to the front as the boys' yacht was then doing.

But they saw that the little white yacht in their wake meant to show them her heels, do what they might, and before long she was on even terms.

Then her bowsprit forged ahead, and as a fresh puff of wind came to both, it helped Wizard Will's craft the most, and she shot ahead, while the victorious crew broke forth in three cheers, which were answered from the decks of all the vessels seeing their triumph, and on the large ocean steamer now quickening her pace as she neared the ocean.

After being passed by the Boy Detectives' yacht, the Curfew headed away for an anchorage under the lee of the Hook.

But Wizard Will held on straight out to sea, and soon after darkness fell, and hid her from view.

Then he took in all his sails but mainsail and jib, and headed down the coast.

He knew the coast well, for often had he cruised along in it, in his own yacht, presented to him by Colonel Richard Ivey, when his mother, Pearl and himself were at Soldiers' Retreat.

At last Barnegat Inlet was reached, and Wizard Will proved himself a good pilot, running safely in in the darkness, and heading for a secure hiding-place for his craft, not very far from the home of Colonel Ivey.

Here anchor was dropped, the sails were furled, and the young sailors sought the rest they so much needed.

The next day Wizard Will, who knew the surroundings perfectly, made known his plan of action to his crew, which was to the effect that they must allow the robbers to land, enter the house and bring aboard of their craft some of the valuables from the mansion, for this would stamp them as freebooters.

They would hardly leave more than one man on the yacht, the other two going to the mansion to carry back the booty, and perhaps they might all three go.

"When we know just what they do we will act," added Wizard Will, and as darkness came on the following night, the boys leaving but one of the crew on their craft as a guard, set out for the scene of action, going in the yacht's boat.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FREEBOOTERS.

UPON arriving near the mansion, Wizard Will ran the boat into a place where the woodland sheltered it in the darkness, and with several of the crew went toward the house.

Arriving near, Will said:

"Foxey, you and Skip go up to the wing where you see the light and knock."

"You will find only an old man and woman there in charge of the place."

"Tell them that some freebooters will break into the house to-night to rob it, and that they must offer no resistance, pretend great fright, and keep quiet, as officers of the law are watching the thieves, and will capture them as soon as they have given the officers a hold upon them by robbing the mansion."

"Won't you go, cap'n?"

"No, Foxey, I prefer not to be known here."

So the two boys set off, and in twenty minutes returned, Foxey informing Will that he had found the old couple at supper and had told them.

"At fu'st I thought they'd go crazy with scare, Cap'n Billy; but they cooled down arter a bit, and will do jist as I said for 'em ter do."

"Now we will go back to our boat."

And hardly had they reached it when Will pointed over the waters to a dark object.

"There comes the sloop," he said.

The vessel came slowly in under light sail, and taking in all canvas, drifted alongside of the pier.

Here she was made fast, and three dark forms left her deck and went toward the mansion.

No light was visible on the yacht, and it was very evident that her crew wished to avoid being seen.

Shortly after they had disappeared around the wing of the mansion, lights were visible in the windows, but these were soon hidden, as though the curtains and shades had been drawn.

For half an hour the Boy Detectives lay waiting, and then dark forms were seen approaching.

"They've got a two-wheel push-cart, and it's loaded," said Skip.

"And a wheelbarrow, too," Wizard Will responded.

"The third man is doubtless busy getting the things ready to cart off," Foxey observed.

The two men put the booty on the yacht's deck and returned quickly to the mansion.

"Now, boys, we must act," said Wizard Will, and he led the way to the yacht.

To conceal themselves on board was but short work, and then in silence they waited.

Soon the two men were seen coming back with other loads, and they stopped on the pier, filled their arms full of plunder, and stepped on board the yacht.

"You are dead men if you move!" cried Wizard Will, springing before the two men, a revolver in his hand, while his crew gathered around him.

Involuntarily the robbers dropped their loads to the deck, but they stood motionless, while sternly came the command:

"Hands up, quick!"

Up went their hands, and next came the order:

"Snap the irons on them, Foxey and Skip!"

In an instant it was done.

"Tie them in the cabin, and one of you stay as a guard; the rest of you come with me."

This order was quickly executed and up to the mansion went the boys.

They went to the rear door and entered noiselessly.

A bright light burned in a room on the left, which Will knew was the servants' sitting-room, and in it, tied in arm-chairs, and gagged was the old man and his wife.

The next moment a man came toward them his arms filled with valuable *bric-a-brac*, while in the hallway were paintings and other works of art of considerable value.

"You are my man!" and Wizard Will thrust his revolver into the man's face, just as he had placed the things carefully upon the floor.

The man attempted to strike up the weapon, but a blow in the face staggered him, and before he could recover Foxey and Skip had the irons upon him.

The moment that the man was a prisoner, Wizard Will slipped out, and Foxey quickly released the old couple, both of whom cried in chorus:

"It was Master Will that came to our aid; let us see him."

"No, you look after your things here, and we will care for the prisoners, while the plunder they have taken to the dock, our boys will bring back to you," said Skip.

"And will Master Will come?"

"I guess so."

"Tell him we must see him, for he's saved the colonel thousands of dollars."

"I'll tell him," and Skip remained at the mansion, talking to the old people, while his comrades brought back the stolen booty and placed it in the hallway.

"This is all," said Foxey.

"Now you can put the things back to-morrow, where they belong, and you'll find nothing gone," Skip said.

"And our cap'n says you are to get some wicked dogs to keep, and you ought ter have yer guns ready and open your doors to nobody arter dark," added Foxey.

"But where is Master Will, for he will stay here to-night, won't he?"

"No, indeed, for he's already gone.

"Good-night," and the boys hastened away.

Reaching the yacht the three prisoners were placed in the cabin, the sails were set, and the yacht went bowling along toward the hiding-place of the other vessel.

Arriving there the anchor was dropped, and the boys, after seeing their prisoners were safe, retired for the night; but at sunrise they were up, breakfast was dispatched, and with Foxey and half the crew on the robbers' yacht, and Wizard Will on the other, they set sail for New York.

It was just sunset as they ran into New York harbor and dropped anchor astern of a schooner that had just come down the East river, and anchored off Catherine street.

"Foxey, do you know that schooner?" quickly asked Wizard Will.

"It's ther Arrer, thet run us down!" cried Foxey.

"You are right, and she will have to pay damages for that cruel night's work," was the reply of Wizard Will.

"I wish she'd pay enough to buy this yacht, for she's for sale," said Foxey.

"How much?"

"Two thousand will get her, her builder told me; but he never tried her, for she's new, and if he knew what she c'd do, he'd double his price."

"We will try and get her, Foxey, for we need a craft for our work," was Wizard Will's response.

"Yes, we'll tarn pirit-hunters," laughed Foxey, and the boat being alongside, the young detective chief took his three prisoners ashore, under escort of four of his boy sailors.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BOY DETECTIVES' TRIUMPH.

THE address of Elegant Ed, The King of Cards, that is his personal address, was known only to the doorkeeper of the band of Land Sharks, Tiger.

So to find the chief and make his report, Wolf, the pretended book-agent, had to go to the retreat of the gang.

The florist-shop was closed, but there was a secret way of gaining entrance, which all of the men knew, and Wolf soon entered the social hall, and his appearance surprised his comrades, who were just about to retire, for they saw that he had something of importance to communicate.

"Tiger, I want the address of the captain," he said, quickly.

"I will go there in the morning and ask him if I can give it to you," said Tiger.

"You'll go to the Tombs in the morning, so tell me to-night, or I'll have the good sense to save myself."

"If it's as important as that I'll go with you to-night."

"It is important, if we wish to save our necks, for I know what I'm talking about; but will we find the chief in?"

"I guess so, as it is after twelve."

"I tried to get here before, but we had a detention on the railroad of several hours, but come at once."

Tiger threw on his coat and hat, and the two left the retreat and wended their way to the elegant abode of the King of Cards.

To their ring at the door Jo-jo made answer, looking very sleepy and ugly.

He recognized the visitor, who addressed him, as the one whom his master had seen in the morning, before he was ready for callers, and so knew he was of some importance, and said:

"The master is not in."

"Where is he?"

"Down at the cloob, I'm fther belavin', sur, playin' keards, an' winnin', too, fer he do be afther havin' great loock."

"At what club?"

"Faith, the foine gintleman's cloob, of which he is a member of the same."

"You mean the Free and Easy Club?"

"That same, sur."

"We will go there in search of him," and the two departed, and wended their way to an elegant mansion, which was one of the well-known city clubs.

A servant in livery ushered them into an ante-room and asked for their cards; but neither were supplied with these necessities of fashionable life, and so they each slipped a piece of silver into the willing palm of the door-tender, and said:

"Simply say that two friends wish to see him."

"He is at the table and winning heavily, as is

his style, gentlemen, so suppose you go in and speak with him?"

They were glad of the chance to get a look inside, although the clerical garb of Wolf looked out of place in the club-rooms of fast men.

But in they went, and there was such a large number present, that they were hardly noticed, excepting by a joke at Wolf from some wag, who said, with more truth than he imagined:

"A wolf in sheep's wool—eh, Noland?"

Then the two friends laughed, and the intruders passed on to the table where the servant had told them "Doctor Edgar" was playing, for by that name was Elegant Ed known in the club, and in genteel life.

The chief saw them, but merely nodded, showing no emotion, and after a few moments, though winning largely, he said, addressing a gentleman near:

"Merton, I'll transfer my luck to you, so take my hand please, for I have some friends awaiting me."

He arose, bowed and joined his pals, saying loud enough to be heard by those about him as he slipped his hands in their arms:

"Ah, doctor, I am afraid you did not know that you were coming into a wicked place when I asked you to stop by for me."

"Verily it is a wicked world that we live in, and sin haunts us at every step," said Wolf in his sepulchral tones.

"How is our poor sick friend, and have you come to take me to him?" continued Elegant Ed for the benefit of those near.

"Yes, he is dying, and you must come at once," said Tiger, who certainly had the appearance of a physician.

"You are not opposed to taking a glass of brandy, my reverend friend, for the doctor is not, I know?" said Elegant Ed.

"No, a little for the stomach's sake is not amiss," Wolf replied, and the chief led them to a sideboard loaded with rare glassware and liquors in decanters.

After a drink together they left the club, Elegant Ed called a hack standing near, and they were whirled up-town at a rapid rate.

"What's up?" said the chief, when the three had entered his handsome flat house, and he had motioned his pals to take seats.

In a very few words Wolf told his story, from his meeting with Wizard Will near the florist's, until his escape, and put particular stress upon the fact that the boy was convinced that the florist was connected in some way with the Land Sharks, and doubtless a raid would be made upon his place as soon as the boy came in town after discovering that he, Wolf, had made his escape.

"This is too bad, for Bostwick is doing a big business in flowers, which pays well; but he must get out, as all of us must, while the fact is, the boy has been too much for us."

"There is not a place where I can take you in the city, and so my idea is to make a complete change of base, and take Philadelphia as our field of operations, until this terrible push against us has blown over."

"It's a good idea, captain, for if we stay here that boy will get a rope around our necks, sure," Wolf said.

"He is a dangerous youngster, worse than the whole force," Tiger put in.

"Well, we have no time to lose, so we'll get ready and start at once."

"I will meet you at the Long Branch boat, for we will go that way to Philadelphia, as least likely to attract attention, and you have the boys there, but don't go more than two of you together."

"Here is a couple of hundred, Tiger, to divide with the men, and my headquarters in Philadelphia will be at the Girard House, and I will register under my name here, that of Edwin Edgar, M. D., so look me up there to-morrow, and I will have found quarters for you."

"Yes, sir; but it is hard to think we are driven out of town by a boy."

"It is best that we run then from a boy, than stay here and be hanged by a man," was the significant response.

"You are right, sir," and the two men departed; but several hours after, when Elegant Ed boarded the Long Branch boat, he picked out among the crowd each one of his band, though he showed no sign of recognition to any of them.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

AFTER his return from his cruise, Wizard Will turned his prisoners over to Captain Daly, with a full statement of their capture, while robbing the mansion of Colonel Richard Ivey.

Not willing to be known by Colonel Ivey in

the matter, Will requested that Foxey, who had discovered the plot, should be witness against the prisoners at the trial; and though the colonel upon learning from his servants that Wizard Will had been there, tried to find the boy, he was unable to do so, so well did Captain Daly and Foxey guard his secret.

Wizard Will disliked this hiding from his step-father, as he believed Colonel Ivey to be, but then he felt that his mother had some good reason for her acts, and so he determined to do as she wished.

Ignorant of the fact that his own worthless father, whom he believed to be dead, had turned up after his mother had married the colonel, he could not surmise why she had secretly fled from so noble a man as his benefactor had always proven himself to be.

But he kept in the background, and unable to find the boy or his mother, Colonel Ivey had set sail for Europe after the trial which sent the trio of robbers, who had entered his country home, to prison for years.

But before he departed, he had sought out Foxey and sought to help him, offering him a handsome sum of money.

This Foxey refused, but he said in his quaint way:

"Colonel, yer offers me more'n I needs for my purposes, but ther fact is, I wants ter borror some money frum yer; mind yer, I says borror, and I wishes ter invest it in a yacht, which we needs in our detective biz."

"Now, ther builder says I kin git ther boat fer two thousand one hundred dollars, and I hain't got thet sum; but if yer'll lend me two thousand on my I. O. U. fer one year, I'll pay it back then, or yer shall have ther yacht."

The colonel was greatly amused at Foxey's request for a loan, and he humored the boy by making him draw up a note and sign it for two thousand dollars, after which he gave him the money, and wishing him every success, the two parted, the Vagabond Detective to hasten at once to the builder and pay him for the yacht, bargaining with him that her name should be put on the stern in handsome gilt letters.

This name was "Pearl," and it will not require much thought upon the part of my reader to discover who the yacht was named after.

Upon returning to the precinct, flushed with joy at his purchase, to communicate to Captain Daly and Wizard Will, Foxey found that his boy chief had just received a letter, and it was handed to him to read.

It had come by mail, and was addressed to

"OFFICER WILL RAYMOND,

"THE BOY FERRET,

"Care of Captain Ryan Daly."

The contents of the letter were short and to the point, for they were:

"My Boy:—

"Rejoice in your triumph, for you have driven out of their accustomed haunts the Land Sharks of the Metropolis.

"We go to seek fresh pastures where no Boy Ferret dogs our tracks, rope in hand, to fit about our necks.

"Farewell.

"ELEGANT ED,

"The King of Cards,

"Chief of the Land Sharks."

While commenting upon this strange letter, a bluff-looking sea-captain was shown into the office, and he made his business known in a few words.

He was the owner of the schooner Arrow, and on the night in question, when she had run down the sloop, he had not been on board, as she had been chartered for a week's pleasure cruise by a party of young bloods, who had all been on a spree, and to clear himself he was anxious to make this statement.

Wizard Will took down the names of those who had been on board, and Captain Daly relieved the honest captain of all blame.

Then Wizard Will went out for a look at the shop of the florist, armed with the written notes his Boy Detectives had jotted down.

He found the place occupied by a young girl, who said her mother had bought out the establishment at a bargain, from a man who had been called hastily away from the city, so that ended the track of the Land Sharks in that direction.

Still there was plenty of work in the city for Wizard Will and his Street Scouts to do, and as time passed on the daring and skillful band of Boy Ferrets won a name that made them famous for the good Secret Service work that they accomplished in bringing criminals to justice.

THE END.

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